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THE

EVIDENCE AND AUTHORITY

OF

DIVINE REVELATION,

BEING A VIEW OF

THE TESTIMONY

OF

THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

TO

THE MESSIAH

WITH

THE SUBSEQUENT TESTIMONIES.

By ROBERT HALDANE, Esq.

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CHAPTER XI.

REVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE ARISING FROM THE HISTORY, THE MIRACLES, THE TYPES, AND THE PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

In the foregoing Chapters, a view has been given of the evidence of Divine revelation, arising from the History, the Miracles, the Types, and the Prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures, as they unitedly bear on the one great subject, the coming of the Messiah. And when we take a retrospect of what we have contemplated in detail, are we not forced to exclaim, "This is the finger of God?" Such a variety of subjects, with such an amazing diversity of particulars, all evidently concentrating in one point, could not have been conducted by human ingenuity. Must it not strike every candid mind, that this converging of the innumerable rays of revelation could have been effected only by the Author of light? What can be more various than the subjects touched on in the Old Testament? yet the most apparently detached and insulated fact never loses sight of Jesus Christ.

While the HISTORY is a relation of facts regarding this world, it is utterly dissimilar to all human histories. It commences with the creation, and conveys information that all the writings of antiquity do not contain,

but instead of it, transmit only childish fables. The account given by Moses, of the original state of man and the present, is the only one that corresponds with what is before our eyes; and yet that it is not the invention of man, is clearly seen from the fact, that men are naturally so averse to this view of themselves, that they deny or pervert it as contained in the Bible.

While this history overlooks those events that are most interesting to the men of the world, and which guide the pen of the human historian, it acquaints us with the government of God, marking the Divine displeasure against sin, which the human historian overlooks or conceals. While the great empires, and mighty men of renown, are passed by in silence, or noticed only in so far as they are connected with the main subject of the history, we have a minute detail of the distinguished individuals to whom the Messiah was promised as a descendant. What human historian is it who acts on such principles? The historians of all nations, both from partiality to their own countrymen, and the desire of popular admiration and applause, always magnify the courage and exploits which they record. Had the historical parts of Scripture been a forgery, or the work of uninspired men, they would have extolled the bravery of the Israelites, and celebrated their victories as the result of unparalleled courage and military skill. This would have flattered the vanity of the nation, and procured for the people a universal reception for the history. Had the design been, not so much to deceive the nation of Israel, as to impose on strangers, the result must have been the same. It is inconceivable that, in such a case, they should not have endeavoured to impress foreigners with the most favourable ideas of their military virtues.

Both vanity and interest would have led to this result. Nothing is better calculated to obtain for a nation security in peace, or victory in war, than the impression of their invincible courage and prowess. But in this Moses, and the other sacred writers, differ widely from ordinary historians. The courage of the Israelites is never exalted, nor is victory ascribed to their valour or might. Success is always attributed to the presence of the God of Israel, and they are often represented as shamefully flying before their enemies.

Nor is success represented as the unvaried result of mere partiality in their God. In this there is a most remarkable difference between the representations given by the sacred historians of the victories and defeats of the Israelites, and the accounts by heathen writers, with respect to the interposition of their gods. The gods of the heathen are represented as influenced by a blind partiality for their friends, and if they do not give victory to their favourites, it is owing to fate, or the opposition of other gods, or some unlucky accident which they cannot surmount. The gods range themselves on different sides in every quarrel among men, and throughout the dispute are as sincere in their efforts to serve the cause as any of the human allies. No crime detaches them from the party whose interest they have espoused, and if their friends are defeated, it is because they have been unable to give them victory. On the contrary, both the victory and the defeat of the people of Israel are from their God. Their success is not owing to mere partiality in Jehovah, but is connected with their respect for his authority, and their punctual observance of all his injunctions. If they sinned, they were beaten and put to shame, even though

their God was all powerful. Such a God is not the creation of the mind of man, such historians were not influenced by the common principles of our nature.

Human historians are inclined to conceal, to palliate, or to excuse the faults of their favourites. A forged history would have clothed friends with every virtue, and would not have ventured to mar the effect designed to be produced, by representing the defects or vices of its distinguished personages. To this the Scripture history presents a remarkable contrast. It paints its characters in the colours of truth and nature. It invests them with no romantic virtues, and hides not their imperfections. The Judges, the Kings, the Prophets, and Priests, as well as the People of Israel, are exhibited to our view with all their defects, their prejudices, their weakness, and their sins. Such a picture was never sketched by a human pencil. Moses and the other sacred historians must have written by divine inspiration.

What can be more powerfully convincing of the inspiration of God than that the facts recorded in the Old Testament are generally designed to illustrate something in the kingdom of the Messiah? Let the facts of this nature, which have been brought together, be viewed in this light, and they will produce the most satisfactory evidence of the truth and inspiration of the Scriptures. Neither accident nor invention is sufficient to account for the innumerable coincidences of resemblance. The nation of Israel itself, its election of God from idolatrous ancestors, and its whole history, is one continued figure of the Church of God. The features of resemblance, pointed out in the Word of God, are

inexhaustible. It is impossible to weigh this subject with candour and impartiality without being convinced that God is the Author of the Bible.

The fact which has been noticed with respect to the preservation of Israel, through all their calamities, and through all the successive conquests of the world by the Babylonians, Persians, Macedonians, and Romans, is a miracle in providence. What but the hand of God could have kept them from being swallowed up by these great empires? Does history afford any other example of a similar kind? But this fact is still more astonishing when it is considered, that their very calamities were overruled to contribute to prepare the way for the Messiah. Their captivity in Babylon and subjection to the successive empires that ruled the world, dispersed a great number of them among the different nations of the earth, and thus contributed to prepare the way for the progress of the Gospel. The scattered Israelites diffused a general expectation of a great deliverer, and by their Scriptures, translated for their use into the Greek language, put on record in the heathen world documents that, after the publication of the Gospel, enabled the people in the different countries to judge of the truth of Christianity, from its being the fulfilment of those writings which had been in their own hands for some hundred years. How greatly was this calculated to facilitate the introduction of the Gospel! The civilized world was acquainted with the expectation of the Jews, and, as we are assured, partook of the expectation. When the Apostles carried the glad tidings to the nations, they found, in every country and in every city, Jews, to whom they had immediate access, and their converts remained a light to the surrounding

Gentiles. Such is the wisdom of the plans of the God of the Bible.

The union of the nations under the Roman empire before the coming of the Messiah, was another circumstance, which, as we have seen, greatly contributed to open a door of access to the gospel. Had the world been split into various and hostile governments, a passage from one country to another would in many cases have been impossible; in all it would have been tedious and difficult. But to prepare a free course for the gospel, the God of providence had united the civilized world into one family. To complete the grand scheme for preparing the world for the reception of the Messiah, and the introduction of his reign, universal peace succeeded the convulsions of many hundred years. Had the nations at the coming of Jesus Christ been engaged in wars as formerly, or the Roman empire, as recently, been torn with civil commotions, access to the different regions of the earth without a series of miracles, would have been denied to the Apostles. Why is it that at that moment the world, from its long agitations, became as calm and tranquil as the sea when the storm has ceased? What but almighty Power, and infinite Wisdom, could combine so many circumstances to regulate the motions of so many independent wheels? The history of the Bible, and the history of the world till the coming of Jesus Christ, exhibit all sublunary events as designed to effect one great plan, the manifestation of the Messiah.

The MIRACLES of the Old Testament, we have seen, are such as stamp the history with indubitable authority. They are distinguished from all the pretensions of the heathens to miraculous interposition, whether

the latter are considered as the tricks of cunning men, or the works of infernal spirits. The nature, the object, and every distinguishing feature of the miraculous interposition of the God of the Bible, are as characteristically different from those of the gods of paganism, as the works of creation are from the works of men. A simple reading of the miracles of the Old Testament, in comparison with those of the histories of Greece and Rome, will afford full means of conviction. The fact that heathen theology claims miraculous intervention, instead of discrediting the miracles of the Bible, abundantly confirms them. It proves that it is the conviction of mankind from the light of nature, that miracles are a proper source of evidence, and authenticates the original miracles of revelation. Granting that the early miracles recorded in the Bible are true, it is utterly incredible that they should not afford a groundwork for the pretensions of heathen theology. Had heathenism pretended to no miracles, it would be an argument against there ever having been any true ones. As far as tradition reports the works of God, they are imitated in the theology of the heathens. The common allegation, then, of unbelievers, that all religions pretend to miracles, instead of discrediting the miracles of the Bible, strongly confirms them.

Some of the miracles of the Old Testament, we have seen, have left their proof written in indelible characters, for the conviction of all ages. The deluge has left traces of its existence in all countries, and is authenticated by the mythology of Greece and Rome. Nothing but the truth of the fact can explain the phenomena of the earth, and the fables of antiquity. The confusion of languages is proved by the different

languages of the family of Adam, and nothing but a miracle can account for it. Notwithstanding the theories of some philosophers, language is as truly the gift of God as reason; and the disuse of the original language, and the introduction of others, cannot be accounted for without divine intervention. The site of the cities of the plain still bears evidence to the fact of the judgment of the Almighty ruler of the world, and proclaims to every generation God's unalterable determination to take vengeance on the workers of iniquity. The whole history of Israel, from their leaving Egypt, is so interwoven with the miraculous intervention of God, that the facts recorded cannot be true, as has been observed, without the miracles, and yet many of these facts have never been doubted by unbelievers. That the Israelites came up out of Egypt against the will of the sovereign, has never been questioned; yet that they should have done so, could only be true upon the supposition of the power and intervention of God. That their route was through the wilderness is not doubted; yet that they could have subsisted there without a constant display of miracles, is impossible. To have taken possession of the country of nations so numerous and warlike, being themselves unaccustomed to arms, was impossible, without divine assistance. In short, the most undoubted facts of their history could only have been true upon the supposition of the truth of the recorded miracles.

The number, the variety, and the aptness of the TYPES of the Old Testament, to shadow forth the mysteries of the Messiah's kingdom, as they are exhibited in the New, form a body of evidence of the truth of the gospel convincing, and even surprising.

That almost every thing contained in all the books of the Jewish Scriptures, should be adapted to prefigure something in the person, character, or doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ, cannot be accounted for upon any other supposition than that God is the author of these Scriptures. We have seen this point illustrated in detail with respect to Persons, Offices, Objects, and Appearances, Places, Institutions of Worship, and Events, from the beginning of the world to the completion of the Old Testament. The very creation of the heavens and the earth, and the seventh-day Sabbath, instituted immediately after, as well as the entrance of Israel into the rest of Canaan, prefigured the spiritual creation, with the rest of Jesus Christ and his people. Sacrifice must have had a divine origin, yet no one worthy of God has ever been ascribed to this ordinance by the invention of unbelievers. The only point of view in which it has meaning and dignity, is its reference to the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. It is obvious that there is no natural connexion between the sacrifice of an animal, and the forgiveness of sin. The light of nature could never have suggested it. Instead of being calculated to take away sin, the light of nature would declare that the slaughter of innocent beasts must bring additional guilt. Without the divine permission, we have no right to kill any of his creatures. Yet sacrifice, as we have seen, is found among all nations. It must, then, have been a divine appointment. If sacrifice in general must have originated with Him, who, from eternity, designed to reconcile the world to himself by the blood of his Son, the amazing variety of sacrifices, and observances in sacrifice, place the typical reference in an irresistible light. The innumer-

able directions for the performance of the rite have all an appropriate reference; and amidst the countless crowd of typical ordinances, no two of them are in all things perfectly alike. In such apparent profusion, there is not the most trifling useless expenditure. Is it not, then, self-evident, that this is the wisdom of Him who formed the earth? Can any parallel to this be pointed out among the inventions of men? We have seen that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was not only prefigured by many things in the ordinances and history of Israel, but that several circumstances conspire to fix the very day on which this great event was to happen, indicating that it should take place on the eighth day—that is, the first day of the week.

Of the many typical persons in the Old Testament who represent our Lord Jesus Christ, the appropriate, characteristic, and various lights, in which each of them exhibits him is truly surprising. No two of them represent him in the same point of view. It takes all to exhaust the subject, and to delineate his full resemblance. That a true history should afford a series of personages in different ages, whose character, offices, and lives, should correspond to those of an individual, cannot be accounted for, but upon the supposition of divine appointment. This evidence is immensely increased by the consideration of the utter dissimilarity of those typical persons to one another. While taken together they are all like Jesus Christ, they have no common resemblance to each other; each of them represents some peculiar feature in the antitype, of which the rest are destitute. Let the reader, with this in his view, re-peruse what has been said in the illus-

tration of typical personages, and it must excite his wonder. When we refer to Adam, Abel, Noah, Melchizedec, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Jonah, &c., we place greater weight on the characteristic and appropriate distinction of typical allusion, than on the number of persons in the list. They all differ—they are all deficient when viewed separately; but when viewed in conjunction, they form an harmonious whole. Not only individuals, numerous and infinitely various, but whole classes, throughout every period of the history of the Old Testament, exhibit a resemblance to the Messiah. We have seen that the kings, priests, and prophets of Israel represent Jesus Christ, whose official name is the fulfilment of their official anointing. How wonderful is it to find a picture so exactly resembling, in such a variety of particulars!

Jesus Christ and his salvation were also represented by typical places, which have been shown to exhibit things belonging to the kingdom of the Messiah. Can a resemblance in so many places, so different in their nature, with so many points of correspondence, be the work of chance? A wild imagination may fancy resemblance where there is none, or a few resembling features may be accidental; but to ascribe to such a cause the likeness of these objects to the kingdom of Jesus Christ, would be highly irrational. In each of the resembling objects, it is not in one point, or in a few, that the resemblance is to be found. Almost every feature in the picture has a corresponding feature in the original. Can it be doubted, then, that the kingdom of Jesus Christ was in the eye of Him who sketched these various similitudes?

The events recorded in the Old Testament are also typical. The crime and punishment of the people of Bethshemesh, that have been noticed, show us how things the most trivial, and apparently accidental, may convey instruction of the greatest importance. How strikingly does this fact exhibit the guilt of self-righteousness, and the danger of all who depend on their own obedience to the law of God! A most important lesson is taught in what is recorded of the conduct of the Israelites, on hearing the report of those who had been sent to search the land of Canaan, and of God having sworn in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest; together with the sequel, that on account of their unbelief, the carcasses of that generation fell in the wilderness. To the spiritual instruction couched in these facts, our attention is specially directed, both in the Book of Psalms and in the Epistle to the Hebrews. What a mass of evidence in favour of Christianity results from finding an infinite number of events all illustrative of the kingdom of Jesus Christ!

Intimately connected with the foregoing sources of the proof of Christianity, we have another, in the PROPHECIES of the Old Testament. To foretell future events, as we have remarked, belongs to God only, and no instance of imposture, or Satanic sagacity, recorded in Pagan history, can at all invalidate this position. The prophecies of Scripture are of such a nature as to set them infinitely above a suspicion of this kind. The things foretold in them could have been known only to the Omniscient God. It is not a lucky guess at future events, where causes were already in visible operation, but a train of predictions from the beginning of the world to the end of the Jewish Scriptures, respecting

things not in the prospect of created intelligence, many of which are still future, while others were fulfilled at the distance of many hundred years. The fulfilment of prophecies affords the evidence of miracles to ourselves and every age.

But what is still more astonishing, the predictions of the Old Testament, we have seen, are linked together as an inseparable chain, and terminate in one grand object, to which they conduct us through an almost endless variety of subordinate events. The first of them was delivered to our first parents immediately after the fall, and was the germ of all the after discoveries of Divine mercy. To it all the promises and predictions of the Bible are referable, The whole contents of both the Old Testament and the New, are but the developement of what this prediction expresses in a single sentence. The gradual discovery of the Messiah in the subsequent predictions, is a wonderful instance of Divine wisdom, and a genuine mark of the hand of God. The progress of revelation has been like the light of the sun, which, from the first dawn, shines more and more clearly to the meridian day.

The Old Testament prophecy, we have remarked, divides itself into three distinct branches, the adaptation of which to the end proposed proves it to be the work of God. The prophecies respecting events at hand, or events that took place during the Jewish dispensation, were necessary for the confirmation of the faith of the nation of Israel, and by being recorded in the most authentic manner, afford evidence to every age. Prophecies which have a double reference, besides their other advantages, afford to us an endless source of instruction and confirmation, by comparing them with

the New Testament. The predictions respecting the times of the Messiah, and all future ages, present in their gradual fulfilment, a constant succession of miracles. Could a system of prophecy on such a plan be the contrivance of men? Can such wisdom be ascribed to imposture? Is there any thing like it in any of the religions of the world? Do the responses of the heathen oracles manifest any thing akin to this? If not—if this be a feature peculiar to the prophecies of the word of God, there is self-evidence, that the religion, of which this is a proof, is true. Human wisdom was as inadequate to form a system of this kind, as to plan the motions of the heavenly bodies.

What is most astonishing, those very things which the Jews were so averse to recognise in their Messiah, and for the manifestation of which he gave the greatest offence to them, are all distinctly to be met in the prophecies constantly in their hands. We have seen, that the Person, the character, and the office of the Messiah, his sufferings, his death, and resurrection, are all minutely described by the prophets. The Prophets describe him as God; that God would be manifest in the flesh, is not a thing that would ever have entered into the mind of man. But how convincing are the predictions of this kind, when viewed in connexion with the history of Jesus Christ! His humble unresisting character, is not what human wisdom would have anticipated, either from his divine nature or his almighty power. All men would have expected him to trample on his enemies, instead of being apparently defeated by them. Prophecy makes the Messiah a Priest, and a King; but in the lowly circumstances in which they describe him, how can he be a King? As descended from

Judah, how can he be a Priest? What but the wisdom of Jehovah could have dictated prophecies corresponding with such exactness to the events, but so unlikely in the prospective estimate of men!

When such satisfaction is derived from each of the innumerable parts of each of these sources of the evidence of the Christian religion, what shall we say when we view them in combination? The man who rejects them does not understand them; and the man who does not understand them, must be blinded by the god of this world, and his hatred of the truth. The evidence of Christianity, arising from the History, the Miracles, the Types, and the Prophecies, of the Old Testament, is a chain of which all the efforts of infidelity will never break a link.

CHAPTER XII.

GENERAL EXPECTATION OF THE MESSIAH.

After the view that has been taken of the History, Miracles, Types, and Prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures, it is of importance to attend to the effect which, by their means, was produced. This effect, as might be anticipated, was very great. A *general expectation* was excited throughout the world, that at the period determined by the Prophets, a great King would appear in Judea, whose dominion was to be universal.

The whole nation of Israel was full of this expectation. Luke, the sacred historian, speaking of John, the forerunner of the Messiah, says, "The people were

in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he was the Messiah or not." On the appearance of John, "The Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou? but he confessed, I am not the Christ.—And they which were sent were of the Pharisees." On witnessing one of the miracles of Jesus Christ, the multitude exclaimed, "Of a truth, this is that Prophet that should come into the world."

Celsus, the philosopher, who lived in the second century, in opposing Christianity avails himself of this general expectation of the Messiah that prevailed among the Jews. Assuming the character of a Jew, he says, "How could we, *who had told all men* that there would come one from God, who should punish the wicked, despise him when he came?" "The prophets," he adds, "say that *he who is to come* is great, and a Prince, and Lord of all the earth, and of all the nations and armies." In another place he observes, "The contentions between the Jews and Christians are very silly, *both sides believing that it had been foretold by the Spirit of God, that a Saviour of mankind is to come.* But they do not agree whether he who has been prophesied of is come or not."

A proof of this expectation is found in the pretensions of false Messiahs. At the period when the true Messiah appeared, a great number of pretenders to that character started up. No false Messiahs are heard of before that age, nor have there been so many in any subsequent age. But when the prophetical weeks of Daniel drew to a close, these pretenders were very numerous, and deceived many, both of the Jews and Samaritans.

This expectation was not confined to the Jews. It was general throughout the world. By means of the seventy years of captivity in Babylon, from which many of the Jews never returned, together with the subsequent revolutions that befell their nation, they were dispersed all over the world. But wherever they went, they retained their religion, and carried with them the Scriptures, which were publicly read in their synagogues every Sabbath-day. The prophecies thus repeated by the Jews, became familar to their heathen neighbours, and were received as predictions of their own oracles. By this means also, the glimmering light of the ancient patriarchal traditions began to be revived. Poets and others, reminded of the "golden age," and adopting the magnificent conceptions of Jewish prophecy, foretold that it would be again restored to the world.

It is not surprising that the early promises concerning the Messiah, and the important changes he was to produce, should have been handed down among the nations, especially throughout the East among the different descendants of Abraham. Various traditions, more or less distinct, such as that which perpetuated the original form of worship by sacrifice, still subsisted in all quarters of the world. Whether or not the first Sibylline oracles at Rome contained any of these original predictions, cannot now be ascertained, as they were always kept secret, and only brought forward to serve the purposes of the government. Although the Sibyls were probably imaginary persons, and the story of the manner in which Tarquin possessed himself of these books was entirely fabulous, they may have contained, along with much fiction, a mix-

ture of traditional truth, derived from early ages. But however this may be, it is certain that there were such prophetical intimations in the second Sibylline books.

About a century before the Christian era, the first Sibylline books were destroyed by a fire which broke out in the Capitol, and consumed the temple where these writings were deposited. The Roman senate deemed it of so much importance to repair the loss, that they sent some of their number to make a new collection in different parts of Asia, in the islands of the Archipelago, in Africa, and in Sicily. The deputies after some time returned, with about 1000 verses in the Greek language, which they had collected from different individuals. These verses, when brought to Rome, could not be so entirely concealed as the ancient Sibylline books, but were in the hands of many private individuals. The use which the senate proposed to make of them, as a state engine, being thus in a good measure defeated, a law was enacted for the purpose of compelling the delivery of all copies of these prophecies to the prætor of the city, while the retention of any of them was prohibited under the penalty of death. Transcripts, however, continued to be privately kept; and, in consequence, their contents were well known. At length Augustus, on assuming the high-priesthood of Rome, revived the prohibitory law, when many volumes were delivered up. That this new collection of Sibylline verses contained a prediction of the appearance of a great king, we have sufficient evidence from the following circumstance.

When Julius Cæsar had attained the summit of his power, he was ambitious of adding to his honours the

title of king. In order to gain the consent of the senate, one of his adherents produced a prophecy from the Sibylline books, of a king who was to arise at that time, whose reign was to be universal, and in whose government the happiness of the world was necessarily involved. Cicero, and the party to which he belonged, employed every effort to withstand this innovation, and discredit the plea by which it was supported. But, in opposing it, he brought no charge of falsification against those who produced this prophecy. *He granted that it was fairly alleged from the Sibylline books*, to which, in his official character, he had free access. But he affirmed that these oracles were no prophecies; for they were destitute of that frenzy and disorder which heathens conceived to be the necessary state of every prophet's mind while he prophesied. "Let us then," says Cicero, "adhere to the prudent practice of our ancestors; let us keep the Sibyl in religious privacy; these writings are, indeed, *rather calculated to extinguish than to propagate superstition*."

Besides those predictions, which had been brought from the East by the deputies of the senate, the contents of the Jewish Scriptures were no secret at Rome. An intimate alliance had long subsisted between the Romans and the Jews, and the number of the latter resident at Rome was considerable. From the accounts so long after preserved by Tacitus and Florus, of what Pompey beheld in the temple at Jerusalem, the nature of the Hebrew worship, which is referred to by Cicero in writing to Lælius, must have been well known.*

* See Horsley's Dissertation, Henley's Observations, and Prideaux's Connexions.

Under the patronage of Julius Cæsar, the free exercise of their religious rites, with all the privileges of their priesthood, was not only confirmed to the Jews by the decrees of the senate, but they were also exempted from taxes during their sabbatical year. In addition to all this, it is obvious, from the public recital every Sabbath day in their synagogues of the law and the prophets, and the translation of them into a language universally read, that their sacred books must have been known both in the provinces and capital of the empire. The singularities of their ritual, customs, and history, with which their prophecies were inseparably blended, could not fail to attract attention; while their origin, and even existence as a distinct people, all pointed to one grand consummation,—the advent of their predicted sovereign, under whom, notwithstanding their national misfortunes and present depression, they anticipated a glorious restoration, accompanied by the acquisition of unbounded and eternal empire.

All this fully explains the cause of that prevalent expectation at Rome, of the appearance of a mighty king who should establish universal dominion, which had long been current all over the East, and which, according to Tacitus, was believed to derive its origin from the Jewish Scriptures. By pretended prodigies, and in various ways, much use was made of this expectation, and different applications of it were attempted, according to the interest or wishes of designing and ambitious men.

Sallust relates, that, owing to this expectation, Lentulus was incited to engage in Catiline's conspiracy, and vaunted that the king thus foretold would arise in the Cornelian family.

"Julius Marathus tells us," says Suetonius, "that a few months before his (Augustus's) birth, a prodigy happened at Rome, by which it was signified, that *nature* was about to bring forth a king for the Roman people; and that the senate being alarmed by it, came to a resolution, that no child born that year should be brought up; but that those among them whose wives were pregnant, in order to secure to themselves a prospect of that dignity, took care that the resolution of the senate should not be registered in the treasury."

The manner in which Virgil has availed himself of this general expectation, first in his Pastorals, and then in his Æneid, is sufficiently notorious. He wrote his celebrated fourth eclogue in the consulship of Asinius Pollio, during the pregnancy of Scribonia, the wife of Pollio. To the expected child he attributes in that poem the character of the great king who was to appear, and ascribes to his reign the same happy effects which are celebrated by the Hebrew prophets. He begins with saying, that "the last age of the Cumean prophecy is come; the great order of ages again commences; the virgin is already returning, and the Saturnian reign."

> "The last great age, foretold by sacred rhymes,
> Renews its finish'd course; Saturnian times
> Roll round again; and mighty years, begun
> From their first orb, in radiant circles run.
> The base degenerate iron offspring ends;
> A golden progeny from heaven descends;
> O, chaste Lucina, speed the mother's pains,
> And haste the glorious birth!"

What Virgil means by the renewal of the Saturnian

times, or reign, is explained by his account of it in the Æneid. Speaking of Saturn, he says—

> "He by just laws embodied all the train
> Who roam'd the hills, and drew them to the plain;
> There fixed; and Latium call'd the new abode,
> Whose friendly shores conceal'd the latent god.
> These realms in peace the monarch long controll'd,
> And bless'd the nations with an *age of gold*."

According to this eclogue, the son to be born was to be the offspring of the gods, the great seed of Jupiter. He was to command the world, and to introduce peace. He was to abolish violence and injustice, and to restore the life of man to its original innocence and happiness. He was to KILL THE SERPENT. The blessings of his reign were to extend to the animal and vegetable kingdoms. The latter was to be purged of its noxious poisons, and the nature of the most savage beasts was to be changed, so that the lowing herds should feed secure from lions. Still there were to remain some traces of ancient fraud. Great cities should still be encompassed with walls, and war should be excited; but at length, under this Sovereign, all was to be composed and happy,—when

> "No plough shall hurt the glebe, no pruning-hook the vine.
> The Fates, when they this happy web have spun,
> Shall bless the sacred clew, and bid it smoothly run.
> Mature in years, to ready honours move,
> O, of celestial seed! O foster son of Jove!
> See, lab'ring Nature calls thee to sustain
> The nodding frame of heaven, and earth, and main:
> See, to their base restor'd, earth, seas, and air,
> And joyful ages from behind, in crowding ranks appear."

This poem proves, not only the expectation which at that time prevailed of the great king who was to arise, but describes the precise features of the Messiah's reign, as delineated by the Hebrew prophets, and especially the peculiar characteristics of its effects on the world, which were to be most remarkable, not at the commencement, but after the conclusion of a certain period.

Virgil could not have been ignorant of the existence of the Jewish Scriptures; nor is it to be imagined that their poetic beauties could have failed to attract his attention, when it is considered that the whole poetry of Greece was ransacked by him for imitation. And no one who compares the 2d, 9th, 11th, and 65th chapters of Isaiah with this fourth eclogue of Virgil, can entertain a doubt that the same images, united in combinations opposite to the analogies of nature, applied to similar subjects, and by both writers in the way of prediction, must have ultimately originated in a common source. Instead of a son, the wife of Pollio was delivered of a daughter; but what was ignorantly applied by the courtly flattery of the poet, was, in less than forty years after, verified in the true Messiah.

Again, in his Æneid, Virgil refers to the expectation of this great king, when endeavouring to reconcile the Roman people to the late subversion of their republic, by insinuating, that the establishment of the house of Cæsar in the person of Augustus, and the consequent extension of their empire, were undeniable proofs of his being the *universal Sovereign* so long promised, and the Divine *offspring of Jupiter* himself.

> "Turn, turn thine eyes! see here thy race divine;
> Behold thy own imperial Roman line:

Cæsars with all the Julian name survey ;
See where the glorious ranks ascend to day !
This—this is *he !* the *chief so long foretold,*
To bless the land where Saturn rul'd of old,
And give the Latian realms a second *age of gold !*
The promised prince, Augustus the divine,
Of Cæsar's race, and *Jove's immortal line !*
This mighty chief his empire shall extend
O'er Indian realms, to earth's remotest end."

Besides the foregoing indubitable testimonies to the existence of a general expectation of a king whose empire was to be universal, the reality of the fact is also established by the most unexceptionable historical evidence. The flatterers of Vespasian professed to find the fulfilment of the prophecy in that emperor. Josephus expressly assigns it as the principal cause of the revolt of the Jews against the Roman government, and of the provocation of that war which terminated in the destruction of Jerusalem.

Tacitus, speaking of the time when Vespasian waged war with the Jews, asserts, that "a firm persuasion prevailed among a great many that it was contained in the ancient sacerdotal writings, that about this time it should come to pass that the East should prevail, and that those who should come out of Judea should obtain the empire of the world."

Suetonius, in reference to the same period, declares, that "there had prevailed, all over the East, an ancient and constant opinion, that it was in the fates, that at that time there should come out of Judea those who should obtain the empire of the world."

It is thus established as an undoubted fact, that at the period of the advent of Jesus Christ, there existed

a *general* expectation of the coming of a great king, that it was *uniform*, that it was *ancient*, that it was founded on what was believed to be the *decree of heaven*, and contained in the *sacerdotal writings*, that he who should appear was to come *out of Judea*, and that he was to obtain *the empire of the world*. This is a point of much importance among the testimonies to the Messiah. It explains the cause of Herod's alarm when he slew the children at Bethlehem, and places in a conspicuous aspect the strong motive which incited him to that violent and atrocious massacre. It furnishes, moreover, the reason of the Emperor Domitian's summoning before him the relations of Jesus Christ, as we shall afterwards see, to enquire if they laid claim to empire. It invincibly proves, that the recorded predictions concerning the Messiah were sufficiently clear and precise to attain their object. And it for ever confutes the opinion entertained by many, who, entirely unacquainted with the subject, and hearing, it may be, of some hasty and ill-founded applications of the prophecies, have rashly concluded, that the predictions in the Scriptures are so obscure and unintelligible as to be nothing better than a labyrinth of mysteries.

CHAPTER XIII.

APPEARANCE OF THE MESSIAH.

THE advent of the Messiah was in exact accordance with the predictions of the ancient prophets. At the

precise time foretold, before the sceptre departed from Judah, Gen. xlix. 10, and at the expiry of the seventy weeks from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, Dan. ix. 25, Jesus Christ appeared in the world. He was born at Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David, which, though not extinct, was then reduced to very low circumstances. He was called *Jesus*, the Greek of the Hebrew name *Joshua*, which last is compounded of two words, and signifies "Jehovah that saveth." The title *Christ*, that is *Messiah*, or "Anointed," being so often added in designation of his office, at length came into use as a part of his name. His birth was first announced to shepherds, keeping watch over their flocks by night, by the angel of the Lord, who, accompanied by a multitude of the heavenly host, proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will toward men." The shepherds hastened to Bethlehem, where they found "the babe lying in a manger." Thus he who had been for ages so earnestly expected by patriarchs, kings, prophets, and righteous men, whose actual advent was proclaimed by the inhabitants of heaven, experienced a far different reception than might have been expected. But although no earthly pomp attended his coming, other signs in the heavens also proclaimed the glorious event. Conducted by a star which they saw in the east, wise men arrived at Jerusalem, enquiring, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" Their enquiries alarmed the jealousy of Herod, who immediately assembled the chief priests and scribes, and demanded of them where the Messiah should be born. The Jewish counsellors quoted the prophecy, Micah, v. 2, which distinctly de-

clared that Bethlehem was the place. The strangers were, therefore, directed by Herod to repair to Bethlehem, to search diligently for the young child, and when they had found him, to return and let him know, pretending that he also wished to do him homage. The men, directed by God, found the young child. They fell down, and worshipping him, presented to him royal gifts; but being warned of God in a dream, they returned by another way to their own country, and saw Herod no more. The mother of Jesus and her husband, admonished by the angel of the Lord, fled with the child to Egypt; while Herod, disappointed that the strangers from the East did not return as he expected, sent and slew all the children at Bethlehem and its vicinity, who were under the age of two years.

Excepting his appearance in the Temple at twelve years old, his residing with his parents, and being subject to them, little more is recorded concerning the early history of Jesus Christ. At length his forerunner, as had been predicted, publicly announced him to the Jews when he was about thirty years of age.

The canon of the Old Testament Scriptures had been completed about 420 years before the Christian era, which is dated four years after the birth of the Messiah.* During the intervening period, the spirit of prophecy was withdrawn from the Jews. At length a man, bearing the aspect of their ancient prophets, clothed with camel's hair, and girt about the loins with a leathern girdle, appeared in the wilderness of Judea.

* The Christian era was intended to be reckoned from the birth of Christ; but owing to a mistake when it was brought into use in the sixth century, it commences four years posterior to that event.

There he lifted up his "voice," and proclaimed that the kingdom of God was at hand. The time of the appearance of John the Baptist is fixed by Luke in the most precise manner: Luke, iii. 1, 2, "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness."

Partly owing to the general expectation of the Messiah which then prevailed, and partly, as it would appear, in consequence of the miraculous circumstances connected with his birth, the Jews were attracted in multitudes to the ministry of John. The rulers also sent priests and Levites to enquire who he was. He answered that he was not the Messiah, but "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah." In the most solemn manner he warned all who came to him to repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and to trust no longer to their descent from Abraham. To enquirers, he gave particular directions for their conduct, corresponding to the spirit of the new dispensation which was about to be introduced. Multitudes were baptized by him, confessing their sins. He informed them that he baptized with water, but that one was to come after him whose shoes' latchet he was not worthy to unloose, who would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

Jesus Christ himself at length came forward and desired to be baptized. "But John forbade him, say-

ing, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? Jesus answering said unto him Suffer us to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." John testified of him, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"—"I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."

The end of the mission of John the Baptist was now accomplished. According to the predictions of the prophets concerning him, he had prepared the way for the Messiah, by proclaiming in the wilderness that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and had pointed him out as "the Messenger of the covenant." Another part of those prophecies respecting John was now to be fulfilled. The transient nature of his service had been intimated, by representing it as "a voice," which is no sooner uttered than it is gone. His appearance was sudden and unexpected; his departure was equally abrupt. Having reproved Herod for taking Herodias, Herod's brother's wife, he was seized, bound, and imprisoned; and soon afterwards beheaded. Like the bright meteor which shoots athwart the gloom of night, he came when darkness brooded over Judea, but he did not disappear till he had summoned the inhabitants of the land to arise and behold their God. Upon hearing of the works of Christ before his death, and that he had sent out twelve of his disciples to proclaim the approach of his kingdom, John appears to have been dissatisfied,

that he who had so boldly and successfully testified of him should be set aside, while others were employed in his service. Although he had seen the Spirit of God descending upon Jesus Christ, and had heard a voice from Heaven proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son," he sent to him two of his disciples with the following message: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"—"Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again these things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." The facts to which Jesus Christ thus referred in his answer to John, were the literal fulfilment of the prophecies concerning the Messiah: they also demonstrated that the power of God resided in him who performed them, while they verified the prophetic descriptions of his reign, which was to be distinguished by condescension, sympathy, and gracious compassion. Messiah was "to bind up the broken-hearted, and to comfort all that mourn." He was also anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor. "The poor among men," said the prophet, "shall rejoice in the Holy one of Israel." These things were sufficient for the satisfaction of John; and as the message he had sent conveyed an indirect imputation of blame for neglecting him, Jesus answered it in the same manner by an indirect reproof. "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." Thus John was warned to be on his guard, to recollect his own inferiority to him concerning whom he had testified, and who had a right to dispose of his servants as he thought most fitting.

After the departure of John's messengers, Jesus pronounced a most honourable testimony concerning him, and declared, that, as filling the office of that messenger who had prepared the way before him, John was more than a prophet: "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." John was more highly honoured than any one who had gone before him, inasmuch as he was more immediately employed in preparing the way of Jesus Christ, and as he actually pointed him out personally as the Messiah. Still, like the ancient prophets, who searched what the Spirit which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, he could only darkly contemplate what was yet unfulfilled. But the least disciple of Jesus, after his resurrection, since his kingdom has been set up, has a clearer understanding, and is able to give a fuller testimony concerning the character, the work, the life, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension to glory of the Son of God, and the nature and progress of his kingdom, than even John himself: "Blessed are the eyes," said Jesus to his disciples, "which see the things that ye see; for I tell you, That many prophets and kings have desired to see those things that ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear and have not heard them."

The early removal of John from his public service, while it was a fulfilment of the prophecies concerning him, cut off every appearance of previous concert. His continued acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah,

even when thus treated with apparent neglect, still more strikingly confirmed his former testimony, than if, being appointed one of the apostles, he had been honoured by the notice and confidence of the Lord, in an active and official situation. It was besides a practical lesson, at the very beginning of their service, of what Jesus Christ so often inculcated on his disciples concerning the treatment they were to expect as his followers.

No human pen, in forming a fictitious narrative, would have drawn such a character as that of the Baptist by the Evangelists. He is represented as a very high personage, the greatest of the prophets, and the harbinger of the Messiah. In such a character, where would human wisdom have placed him among the attendants of Jesus? Doubtless it would have seated him on the right hand of the Saviour, and made him the most distinguished among the disciples. But, instead of this, he has no familiar intercourse with his Master, is treated with apparent neglect, so as to be himself stumbled, and is removed from the scene of action at the very moment that human wisdom would have called him to the performance of the greatest services. While the simplicity of his history accords with the predictions respecting him, it is very far from corresponding with the natural anticipations of the mind that contemplates the purpose of his mission. Had his character been the invention of forgery, we should have heard nothing of the message sent by him to Jesus to enquire if he was the Christ. Indeed, this is so opposite to human wisdom, that many are so shocked with the idea of the doubts of John the Baptist, that they cannot admit the obvious meaning of the

language of the history. They labour to make it appear that the message was sent by John, not for his own sake, but for that of others, although there is no such intimation in the narrative, and though the reply of our Lord makes it evident that the doubts were those of John himself. While the existence of such doubts is quite consistent with the existence of the most assured faith in former times, and with the testimony that John gave to Jesus as the Lamb of God, it is so far removed from man's wisdom, that it would not have been found, had the character been drawn by a human hand. Instead of making him send a message indicating doubt or dissatisfaction, human wisdom would have concealed the fact, had it existed, and have studied the strongest expression of testimony that ingenuity could invent.

The conduct of our Lord with regard to John on the occasion, is striking and characteristic. His answer is unceremonious, dignified and authoritative. Yet it is both strengthening and consolatory, in the prospect of the approaching death of his servant. He speaks like a sovereign—a sovereign who acknowledges himself under no obligation even where life is devoted to his service. Yet, while he sends no complimentary message in return, but dismisses the messengers of John without any expression of approbation of him who sent them, he bears ample testimony to John immediately after their departure, and recognises him in the high dignity of the harbinger of the incarnate Jehovah.

The characters of John and of Jesus Christ are here exhibited in a light extremely different, and the difference is one which would not have appeared in a com-

position of human invention. John evidently was unprepared to expect such neglect from his Master, and such persecution from Herod. Jesus takes it for granted that this is a common thing in his kingdom. Had human wisdom conceived these two characters, the servant would not have been so uninformed of the plans of his Master. John knew his Message, but he knew not the nature of that kingdom whose appearance he was commanded to announce.

After the death of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ remained the only prophet on earth. At certain times there were several prophets in the world, but it was proper that the Prince of the Prophets should have a period in which there was no other prophet but himself. Part of his ministry was already past, when John was still living. It was therefore fitting that this prophet, who was so great, should be taken out of the world, in order that Jesus Christ should remain in it the only prophet before ascending to heaven.

Jesus Christ, when he entered on his public ministry, began to proclaim, as his forerunner had done, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Of those who attached themselves to him he chose twelve, whom he denominated apostles, and likewise seventy other disciples, whom he sent through Judea, to make the same proclamation, and to excite general attention. His kingdom was not set up till after his resurrection from the dead, which was the grand confirmation of his title as God's Anointed.

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus Christ maintained a considerable reserve in the declaration of his character. Unless he had done this, such was the inveteracy of his enemies, that his life could not have

been preserved without constant miraculous intervention. But owing to the course which he adopted, he was not apprehended by the rulers, till "his hour" (the appointed time of the consummation of his mission) "was come." All along he had given sufficient intimation of his character. He that had ears to hear might hear. But towards the close of his ministry, he laid aside all reserve. In the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, he performed some of his most astonishing miracles; he openly came forward as the Messiah; reproved and confuted the rulers who opposed him; rode publicly into Jerusalem, as had been foretold, and assumed royal and sacerdotal authority in the temple as his Father's house. Overawed for a while by the majesty of his character, and fearing the people, who attentively listened to him, the rulers durst not lay hands on him; but after much deliberation, being reduced to the necessity of either acknowledging him as the Messiah, or apprehending him as an impostor, they at length resolved to seize on him by night. One of his own followers became the betrayer of his retirement; in the dead of the night a band of armed men came upon him in the garden of Gethsemane; even then they were made to feel they had no power of their own against him; on approaching to seize him they fell backward on the ground. But having thus displayed his power and their weakness, he voluntarily submitted to be taken, his followers were dispersed, while he himself was condemned by the Jewish rulers, and the Roman government, and finally put to a cruel and ignominious death.

When Jesus Christ was arraigned as a criminal before the high priest and elders and scribes, and after-

wards at the judgment-seat of the Roman governor, to the accusations preferred against him "he answered nothing." These were indeed false; but to understand the reason of his silence we must raise our eyes to a higher judgment-seat. We must behold him bowing before the tribunal of divine justice, appearing in the room of his guilty people, whose iniquities were laid upon him, and standing in their stead under the accusation of the broken law. This circumstance in the history of the Redeemer is so remarkable, that it was specially noted in ancient prophecy. "He was oppressed and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth," Isaiah, liii. 7. Another prediction concerning him was also fulfilled. "Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore my heart faileth me," Psal. xl. 12.

The greatest crime that men ever committed was the crucifixion of the Son of God; but from this crime has proceeded the greatest of all blessings. In this manner God overrules all things for his own glory. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

On the occasion of the death of Jesus Christ, his disciples, who had very imperfectly comprehended his design, and the work in which they themselves had engaged, were struck with astonishment. But shortly afterwards, they declared that, on the third day after his crucifixion, he had risen from the grave, had appeared to them, and to about five hndred more of

his disciples, and that during forty days he had instructed them respecting his kingdom, after which, in their presence, he had ascended up to heaven. They affirmed that, before he departed, he gave them a commission to proclaim in all the world the glad tidings of his resurrection, with all those important considerations which it involved, commanding all men to believe and obey the truth.

Except the appearance of Jesus Christ after his resurrection, there are none of the great facts concerning him declared by the apostles, the truth of which rests on their solitary testimony, and that of the other disciples. All the rest were transacted publicly before the world. In the midst of Jerusalem, and at the next Jewish feast after he suffered, the apostles openly referred to this publicity. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, *as ye yourselves also know.*"

The public appearance of the Redeemer after his resurrection, did not comport with the design of his mission. During the whole of his ministry the Jews had treated him with every insult. They had at last desired the release of a robber rather than consent to his acquittal; with murderous rancour they had demanded his death, and, in the blindness of their rage, had imprecated the guilt of his blood upon themselves and their children. God had spoken to them, and they had not heard, therefore they were left to walk in their own counsels; the day of vengeance was at hand, and wrath was about to overtake them to the uttermost.

After the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, the period of his humiliation was past. Before his death, although the prince of this world had nothing in him,—nothing on which he could fix his temptations, and make them effectual as in sinful men,—yet to give the world a proof of love to his Father, and, in obedience to his command, Jesus had condescended to enter into a contest with Satan and his adherents. In this contest, his heel had been bruised. He had been despised, rejected, and persecuted even till he was brought down to the dust of death. But, "through death, he had destroyed him that had the power of death." He had now bruised the serpent's head, and obtained a final victory over him and all his progeny. It was not fitting then that the son of God should afterwards appear as formerly amidst his enemies. This would have exposed him again to the same humiliating insults which he had hitherto experienced. They who could resist the evidence of the miracles he had wrought in the temple, in their presence, before his death—the extraordinary appearances that took place at his crucifixion—the indubitable information they had received of his resurrection—and afterwards the miracles which his Apostles performed, would not have been persuaded by seeing him after he rose from the grave.

The scheme of redemption required, that before his death the form of a servant should be predominant in the Redeemer's appearance; that after his resurrection the form of God should be conspicuous. His familiar conversation with the world before his death was a principal branch of his humiliation; and his humiliation was an essential part of those sufferings by which the guilt of man was expiated. But the atonement

being once made, the form of a servant was to be removed, and Christ was to re-assume his glory.

That he would not again appear to them on earth, Jesus Christ had distinctly informed the Jews, before his crucifixion: "Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me." All that was "behind of the sufferings of Christ," was to be filled up by his disciples, and through them only he was henceforth to address the world.

Had the public appearance of the Messiah, after his death, been otherwise admissible, nothing, even on the ground of evidence, would have been gained; but rather the reverse. Many of the Jews had seen him but occasionally, others at a distance, or perhaps only when hanging upon the cross. This would have given rise to doubtful or contradictory testimony. Whereas now, we have the unanimous, unvarying evidence of a sufficient number of witnesses, who had long enjoyed familiar intercourse with him, and could not be mistaken as to his appearance. These witnesses, too (who died for the truth which they asserted), publicly wrought miracles in his name, after his resurrection, in the midst of Jerusalem; and this as fully stamped the truth of their testimony as if Jesus Christ himself had been visibly present.

Before his resurrection, Jesus Christ more frequently designated himself the Son of Man than the Son of God. But after he had risen from the dead, he no more calls himself the Son of Man. This appellation indicated the weaknesses and sufferings to which he

had, as a man, rendered himself subject. But after he had emerged from that state of abasement, and by his resurrection had been declared the Son of God with power, he changes the style. From that period he conversed frequently with his disciples, and set before them the necessity of his death; but he no longer calls himself the Son of Man. Before his death he said it was necessary that the Son of Man should suffer; but being risen, he says, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

After his death he returned to the city of Jerusalem, but he entered no more into the temple. It was not fitting that the great and everlasting High Priest, having consummated that sacrifice which annulled all the sacrifices of the temple,—the veil of which he had rent on his being about to make his entry into the heavenly sanctuary,—should again enter an earthly temple which was only a figure of that which is celestial, and which, having now served all the purposes intended by it, was speedily to vanish away.

It is proper, before closing this account of THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS CHRIST, to advert more particularly to those miracles which he performed in the course of his ministry, to which he appealed in attestation of his divine mission, and which hold a very conspicuous place in relation to his manifestation in the flesh. These miracles were credible in themselves, whether we consider the character of him who wrought them, or the purpose for which they were exhibited. Owing to their nature and their publicity, their reality was ascertained with certainty by every one who witnessed them; while considered as palpable and tangible facts, they were as properly the subject of testimony

as any transaction whatever. They were not only very numerous, but also of various kinds; and not merely adapted for the foundation of that system of religion which he taught, but likewise to illustrate its nature. He raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, cured the diseased, multiplied loaves for food, changed the substance of things, as of water into wine, calmed the winds, and stilled the raging of the sea. In these ways he proved the reality of his miracles, and distinguished them from the juggles of impostors; for one or two insulated actions may impose on the world, and pass for miraculous, but it is impossible that this can take place in such as are frequently performed at different times, and of different kinds. He wrought his miracles in public, in sight of all the people, thus exposing his actions to the judgment of the world. In this way, also, they are distinguished from false miracles of impostors, said to be wrought at a distance, or in a concealed manner, before a few interested persons.

The object of the miracles of Jesus Christ was to fix the attention of the people, and to lead them to give ear to his words, and to consider his person as the Son of God, and the true Messiah, whose words were of Divine authority. At the same time we must remark, notwithstanding the empty scoffs of infidels on the subject, that the holiness and purity of his doctrine confirmed his miracles, while, on the other hand, the doctrine was confirmed by them. These two things contributed mutually to the establishment of each other; for a new doctrine, such as that of Jesus Christ, however holy and pure, would have passed for incredible, both on account of its novelty and its grandeur,

if it had not been supported by Divine and supernatural works, which strike the eyes and the senses. On the other hand, actions in themselves so surprising might have been suspected as the miracles of a false prophet, if they had not been conjoined with a doctrine so pure, and holy, and admirable in itself. The light and the heat of the sun, which naturally go together, reciprocally confirm and verify one another. If we were illuminated with great light without heat, it would not be the illumination of the sun; neither, if we were warmed with great heat without light, would it indicate his presence.

The miracles of Jesus Christ were distinguished from those of Moses and the other prophets, inasmuch as these last frequently issued in the destruction of human life. These were miracles of justice and of vengeance, as the plagues with which Moses visited the Egyptians, the fire from heaven which Elijah brought down on those who were sent to him, and the wild beasts which came out of the wood and devoured the children who mocked Elisha. But all the miracles of Jesus Christ were beneficent and merciful. He caused none to die, but he raised the dead; he struck none with the loss of sight, but he opened the eyes of the blind; he inflicted no diseases, but he cured them; he raised no tempests, but he allayed them; which discover to us the mild and gracious character of his ministry. When his disciples requested him to allow them to command fire to descend from heaven to consume a village of the Samaritans, he replied in these memorable words, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And accord-

ingly he says, " Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart ;" that is to say, always beneficent, accessible, and kind.

The miracles of our Saviour are distinguished from those of his servants, by being performed by his own power, while theirs were done by power communicated to them. Jesus Christ acted in his own strength, derived from his Divine nature; but the prophets and apostles were only instruments, by means of whom God wrought the miracles. It is on this account that Jesus said, " Virtue is gone out of me ;" but Peter, on the contrary, answered unto the people, " Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this; or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk ?"

It was necessary that Jesus Christ should perform miracles in order to authenticate his mission, and to exhibit the truth of his personal character. He was the Son of God, and declared himself by his words to be so. But the Son of God could not be in the world without displaying the acts of his omnipotence. He called himself the Messiah; he was come to abrogate the ancient law of God, and to introduce into the world a new revelation. It was necessary that he should authenticate all these things by miracles which bore the seal of heaven, and attested the visible approbation of God.

The character which the evangelists give of Jesus Christ, displays every excellency. In the history of his life, we see both the divine and human natures exhibited in one person, with every distinguishing feature. The mighty works which he performed were generally an emblem of his compassion and power in saving and

cleansing sinners. There was no ostentatious display of his miraculous powers, or any prodigal waste of miracles. His teaching was generally unpremeditated, and obviously occasioned by what occurred in his intercourse with his disciples or his enemies; yet there is the most prompt but profound display of wisdom, delivered in the most simple, but energetic and beautiful language. His manner also was dignified, in the midst of simplicity and meekness. His familiarity with his disciples never lost sight of his high character. He awed his enemies often into silence, and his very disciples were not emboldened to unrestrained freedom. He bore with the unteachableness of his friends, yet did not excuse their incredulity and obstinacy. He rebuked with a wonderful mixture of severity and kindness. In his condescension, he never unsuitably descended from his dignity. In all his encounters with his adversaries, he was never entangled by subtlety, nor at a loss for the most convincing reply. His enemies combined, and, by the conflicting of opposites, they are confident of taking him in a snare; but he replies, and leaves them in confusion. His answers are all perfect oracles of wisdom, which no study could improve. While purity and holiness shine in him with unsullied lustre, he does not affect popularity, by showing zeal for such things as were of high esteem among those who made the greatest pretences to sanctity. Instead of conforming to the notions of the Pharisees with respect to external observances, founded on the traditions of the elders, he condemned them in the most marked and decided manner. His character is in every respect perfect,—a character the conception of which would never have suggested itself to the wisdom of man—a

character which, in the judgment of every candid mind, must have belonged to him who was Emmanuel, God with us, and which must have been drawn by the Spirit of God.

The proof of the facts concerning Jesus Christ shall now be produced. The evidence on which they rest is not derived from one quarter only; it arises from various sources. It is collected from friends and from enemies—from Christians, from Jews, and from heathens. It is established on the direct records and testimonies of the first, on the silence of the second, and on the admissions, the historical notices, and the public edicts of the last. All the ancient authors, whether friends or enemies, who have mentioned the subject, unite in testifying, that Christianity had its origin from Jesus Christ, at the period which the Scriptures assign, while, at the same time, they confirm the leading facts which they contain.

CHAPTER XIV.

TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES TO THE MESSIAH.

THE testimony of the apostles to Jesus Christ is of the strongest and most unexceptionable character. It is the evidence of men who accompanied him both in public and in private during the whole of his ministry. "*That which we have heard*," say they, "*which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life, declare we unto you.*" They attest facts in which, from their nature, they could not be deceived; and

which, had they not existed, they had no conceivable interest to impose upon others. As eye-witnesses of the conduct of their Master, they must have known the truth; and as suffering punishment for their testimony, they could have no possible advantage in bearing witness to a falsehood. Although men of no education, they were as well qualified to report matters of fact as the most profound scholars.

The account given in their writings of the life of Jesus Christ, bears the strongest internal marks of truth. Nothing can be more remote from enthusiasm than the whole of their narratives. No raptures or ecstasies, no affectation of eloquence, no credulity or self-conceit, no traces of a heated imagination, not even a word that betrays the workings of passion, can be found in their writings.

In narrating a train of the most astonishing circumstances, where truth alone could preserve consistency, they are uniformly consistent with themselves and with each other. And while the same events are sometimes presented under different aspects, no discrepancy occurs which does not tend to confirm rather than impeach the credit of the several historians.

Their candour and impartiality in all that regards their own character, is manifest beyond dispute. Without the smallest reserve, they relate many things respecting themselves, which other writers carefully gloss over or conceal. Their prejudices, their ignorance, and even their want of fortitude, are all disclosed. Every thing in their narrative bears the strongest mark of veracity; and the train of circumstances is so necessarily connected, that it is impossible to admit any one part without receiving the whole.

In their history of Jesus Christ, they have applied to him the types and prophecies of the Mosaic dispensation; and successfully shown, that in him, as "the end of the law," the whole of the multiplied particulars of that ancient institution, converging to one common centre, have a consistent accomplishment. In delineating his character, they simply relate facts—what he said, and what he did, without any encomium. This is a circumstance altogether decisive of authenticity. To relate actions so astonishing, without any expression of wonder, and without bestowing praise, is not in the style of man. Would any human author record such a series of amazing transactions, without once turning aside to give expression to his own feelings, or endeavouring to exalt his hero by his own commendations? Especially, would this be done by writers of the class to which the apostles and evangelists generally belonged? Let the work be supposed to be executed merely by men, and the praises of Jesus Christ would exceed in length the whole evangelical history. Its authenticity is proved, not simply by what is recorded, but also from the absence of what must have been expressed had it been the work of man.

To support a perfect character through a long train of action has ever been deemed a hopeless task. It would seem that the natural defects of the human heart are an insuperable barrier to this, as it cannot supply the model. But the apostles and evangelists have, in a simple narrative of facts, exhibited the astonishing picture. They have presented to the world, what has often been desired and attempted, a character in every respect perfect, supported through a variety of interesting scenes. In public, their Master, whose history they

relate, is attacked by enemies whom he silences; and, in private, he appears among his friends whom he instructs. We see him in the most trying situations constantly displaying the same lofty superiority and wisdom, the same purity and meekness, the same dignity and condescension, and uniformly pursuing the great object of his ministry on earth. In this manner they have portrayed a character, combining every excellency, and carrying every virtue to the highest point, without the smallest flaw or defect. In performing this work, they confessedly stand alone. No writer besides, in all the indulgence of imagination, far less in descriptions drawn from real life, has ever achieved such a triumph.

To the accounts thus transmitted in their history, and promulgated in their discourses, they uniformly adhered, amidst the greatest opposition, trials, and difficulties. They displayed a zeal which no opposition could quench, a fidelity which no temptation could shake, a courage which no danger could dismay; and most of them laid down their lives in attestation of the truth that they advanced.

The apostles could derive no personal advantage from testifying the resurrection of Jesus Christ, had it not taken place; on the contrary, if not true, they had every possible inducement to deny it. They knew the danger to which their attestation of the fact that he was risen exposed them, by which they provoked the rage of all men. By an opposite testimony, they would have obtained the countenance and favour of the rulers, who were so desirous of proving that he whom they had crucified was an impostor, and whose interests were so deeply involved in the question. On the supposition,

besides, that there had been no resurrection, the apostles would have been impelled to declare it, by the strong feeling of resentment they must have experienced on account of a fraud by which their credulity had been abused, and themselves subjected to the greatest dangers and hardships, and exposed to the utmost ridicule and contempt. But to their risen Lord they bore their testimony in a manner the most constant and uniform, without ever once retracting, although thereby exposed to all sorts of persecutions, and even to death itself. They bore it, not in places that were remote, but in Jerusalem itself; not at a distant period, but immediately after the event; not among friends, or persons who had no interest in the subject, but in the presence of those who had crucified their Master; not before people who were credulous and easily imposed on, or who possessed not the means of detection, but before the Jewish Sanhedrim, before magistrates, and before kings. They testified not of a person unknown, but of one who during his life had publicly wrought many miracles, to which they appealed. On the persuasion of the truth of their testimony, they undertook the conversion of the whole world, which, of all enterprises, was the most difficult, and apparently altogether impracticable.

They showed, by their writings and by their actions, that they were men of piety and probity; and that religion, which they founded on their testimony, proves its divine character, as being an enemy to every sort of vice, and as enjoining all kinds of virtue.

If any refuse to credit the testimony of the apostles, they must do it on one or other of these grounds, either that they were *deceived* or *deceivers*. But to maintain either the one or the other of these alternatives, will

be found a task of equal difficulty. If it shall be said that they were deceived, a little consideration will show it was impossible. Men may be deluded in matters of theory, and bewildered by ingenious speculations; their imaginations may be inflamed by enthusiasm, and the opinions which they ardently wish to be true they may at length be brought to believe. But though in these ways there may be enthusiasts in opinion, none can be found to be so in matters of fact, that are plain and obvious to the senses, which do not admit of deception or collusion, and which are constantly repeated for years. Such was the character of the facts which the apostles witnessed, and of the miracles which Jesus Christ is declared to have performed.

At length they beheld him put to death in the presence of multitudes. They saw his lifeless body taken down from the cross, and given up for burial. They once more beheld him alive, bearing in his body the marks of his crucifixion. Of his resurrection he had given them several previous intimations, which they afterwards plainly understood, although they did not well comprehend them at the time, being unable to reconcile them with the ideas they had formed of his character. They saw him at last ascend to heaven, and a cloud receive him out of their sight.

Before his ascension, Jesus Christ had promised to bestow upon his apostles, after his departure, the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. These accordingly, they inform us, they received, and, in consequence, were themselves enabled to work miracles. The sick were brought to them from all quarters, and all who applied for aid were healed. In thus performing miracles themselves, it is impossible they could be

deceived. But one miraculous gift above all they possessed, in which the most determinedly incredulous cannot suppose there could be self-deception;—they were enabled to speak foreign languages, and intelligibly to address people from different countries in tongues which they had never learned, nor possessed any means of acquiring. Could they be deceived in this? The absurdity of the supposition is manifest. To reject the testimony of the apostles on the ground that they were themselves deceived, would discover a degree of incredulity amounting to positive infatuation; for never was there any thing more certain in this world, than that these men were *not deceived.*

There is, however, a second alternative, founded on the supposition that the apostles deceived others; but to such an imagination, every principle that actuates human nature stands directly opposed. They had been warned from the first of the difficulties that lay before them in the work in which they engaged, and of the treatment they would assuredly experience. And of this they had seen an early example in the case of John the Baptist. But whatever expectation of a worldly kingdom they might have entertained, like the other Jews, before his death, the crucifixion of their Master must for ever have extinguished all their most fondly cherished hopes. They saw him expire in apparent weakness, amidst circumstances of agonizing distress on his part, and of triumph on that of his persecutors. They had then an opportunity, if they had chosen, to return to their own homes and occupations, which they had renounced for his service. In doing so, they were in no danger of molestation from the Jewish governors, who appear at that time to have

considered them too contemptible to be worthy of the smallest notice. But not one of them departed. Though far from being credulous, as appears in the case of Thomas, and from other circumstances, or from being unsusceptible of the impression of fear, as the previous conduct of every one of them proves, all, on that trying occasion, stood firm. So far from being shaken by what they then saw, we find them, a short time afterwards, coming forward in a new character, without any of their former timidity or ignorance; but, on the contrary, with the greatest boldness, and the most complete information on the subject of their mission. Nothing can account for this extraordinary change, but the instructions which, subsequently to his resurrection, they declare they had received from their Master, and the promised inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

Before the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Peter, the most forward and impetuous of the apostles, trusting to his own strength, declared, that though all men should forsake him, yet would not he. Jesus, who knew the weakness of man, and also the power and malignity of Satan, who at this time desired to have Peter, that "he might sift him as wheat," informed him, that before the cock should crow, he would deny him thrice. But, after his resurrection, having himself undertaken for Peter's adherence to his cause, which by his divine influence he would now secure, he intimated to him, that, so far from denying him, Peter would lay down his life in his cause. "When thou wast young," said he, "thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another

shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God."

Such were the prospects as to this world held out to the apostles, both by the fact of their Master's crucifixion, and by his declarations to them; yet they persevered; and they were so far from considering his crucifixion any reproach, or a reason for relinquishing his service, that it was the subject in which they gloried most. "God forbid," says Paul, who had forsaken all for his sake, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." This is that same apostle who, not insensible to the painful trials to which his situation as a follower of Jesus Christ exposed him, says, in another place, "I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death, for we are made a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. . . . If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

The only apparent worldly motive that could be supposed to influence the apostles, was that authority among the disciples with which they were to be invested. Of pre-eminence, at first they were, like others, ambitious, and were on different occasions sharply rebuked for their unseemly ambition. But when better instructed, they uniformly disclaimed the exercise of any superiority over their followers which could yield them sinful gratification. All the honour and power, in the most unqualified manner, they ascribed to their Master, as their writings demonstrate, and this was the especial duty they anxiously inculcated upon others. To this, indeed, they were conducted by the doctrine

they taught, every part of which reminded them of the admonition they had received from the Lord. "Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

But, besides all other considerations, the character of the religion they promulgated stood awfully opposed to every idea of deception. The view they exhibited of the holiness of God, of his infinite abhorrence of sin, and of those tremendous sanctions by which his authority is guarded, was carried by them to the utmost extent. Having deliberately renounced every prospect of ease in this world, and every expectation from the religion in which they had been brought up, is it according to the principles of human nature to resort to a system which, while they relinquished every other hope, condemned them without remedy, if on any pretence they continued to be guilty of habitual deception? The idea of doing evil that good may come, they have stigmatized in the severest terms. Of persons who accused them of acting on this principle, they declare that their "*damnation is just*,"—"Knowing," say they, "the *terror* of the Lord, we persuade men." The supposition, then, that while at the expense of their blood they taught and exemplified so holy a religion, they were wilfully and deliberately practising deception, is as incompatible with the known principles of human nature, as it is to choose pain for its own sake in preference to pleasure. But supposing this possible in an individual, could a number of men at one time be found thus to act? And if they commence the work, will they all persevere in it? Will each one act his part faithfully and uniformly, till a violent death removes him from his painful situation? Shall there be no struggle

for pre-eminence, no mutual crimination, no quarrelling, no separation, no recantation in the prospect of death, which might conduce to the overthrow of the common cause? Some of them, under the influence of human infirmity, did quarrel and separate; but, so far was this from leading to the detection of hidden evil, as it infallibly would have done had any deception existed, each continued to pursue his own course, endeavouring, by every means in his power, to promote that work in which he had been previously engaged.

Still, if there be any deception and imposture in the case, shall not one at least be found to break the unhallowed combination, and reveal the wicked imposture? Shall not one be found willing to recommend himself to the favour of the men in power, while at the same time this temptation is rendered irresistible by the opportunity presented of at the same moment liberating himself from trouble and disgrace, from guilt and death? One of the apostles did indeed prove a traitor. Judas had accompanied Jesus Christ from the beginning, and had been admitted, like all the others, to the same opportunities of observation. If, then, any plot was known to the rest, he was acquainted with it; if any underhand combination existed, he was privy to it. He then, at least, would have discovered every thing. For a bribe he betrayed his master. What, then, did he disclose? When he saw the result of his treachery, in the condemnation of Jesus, overwhelmed with insufferable remorse, he cast away the bribe, and exclaimed in bitterness of spirit, "*I have betrayed innocent blood,*" and went and hanged himself.

Turn, on the other hand, to the case of Paul of Tarsus. Brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, encouraged

by the rulers on account of his violent persecution of the disciples, and invested with a commission of authority against them, he is suddenly arrested in the midst of his career, and becomes at once a most zealous supporter of that cause which he had laboured to destroy. In the situation of favour in which he stood, and fully acquainted with the distressed circumstances of those whom he was persecuting to death, nothing can account for this sudden, complete, and lasting change, if we reject the explanation which he himself has given, when he declares that Jesus Christ met him on his way to Damascus. The uniform allegiance he afterwards yielded to him, the zeal he displayed, and the sufferings, even unto death, which he endured in his service, sufficiently attest the full conviction he entertained of the truth of that religion which he had once so violently opposed. Several of his epistles to his Christian brethren are written from prison, and he styles himself "a prisoner of Jesus Christ,"—"for whom," says he, "I have suffered the loss of all things." Finding fault with the church at Corinth, he says, "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you." In his second Epistle to the same church, when cautioning them against false teachers, he says, "Are

they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep: in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." This is the man who was at one time "exceedingly mad" against the disciples of Jesus, while he basked in the sunshine of power and priestly favour; but who now "preached the faith which once he destroyed." For so great a change, at so vast an expense, *there must have been an adequate cause*. Such sufferings as are above described, Paul and his fellow-apostles endured in that service in which at last they laid down their lives. From these considerations we have positive certainty, that the apostles were *not deceivers of others*. They could not be impostors; they were too many in number. Imposture is never resorted to without some motive of interest or ambition. In the case of the apostles we find none. They underwent the greatest hardships, and many of them suffered death. They were often warned by their Master, and knew beforehand, as we see they afterwards experienced, the danger to which their profession of Christianity exposed them, and the sufferings

they must encounter. Yet their faith and conviction triumphed, and they persevered.

On no supposition can *deception* have place in this matter. Every man of common intelligence *knows* it to be *impossible* for twelve men to maintain consistency in falsehood respecting a matter involving a great variety of circumstances, while they are separated, watched, and placed in such situations as inevitably to throw them at one time or other off their guard.

The testimony of the apostles to Jesus as the Messiah, is not only in itself the most unexceptionable that was ever brought in evidence on any question, but is also characterised by some circumstances of a peculiar nature, which raise it immeasurably beyond what can be produced on any other subject. Their voluntarily committing to writing the substance of all the transactions and doctrine of their Master, evidences that they had the fullest confidence in their truth. By this, they laid themselves open to attack much more than they would have been, had they presented to their adversaries no documents which would furnish scope to ingenuity to sift and torture, and which, if they contained any mistakes or oversight, could not be afterwards rectified, but must remain permanent evidence against their pretensions. No impostor is likely to commit himself by written statements of pretended facts, which every one into whose hands they come is able and willing to detect. Nothing but the fearlessness of truth, and the confidence of inspiration, could have made the writers of the New Testament record a boundless variety of facts and transactions of such a nature, that they could easily be refuted if false, and which even the most scrupulous correctness could not

altogether secure against cavil. But the apostles, and their companions the evangelists, have committed to writing a series of the most astonishing events in the age in which they took place, and have presented them to those who were capable of detecting them, if the things reported did not happen, or if their reports were exaggerated.

If any human testimony ever attained the certainty of demonstration, it is in the instance of our Lord's resurrection, which is established with far greater certainty by the evidence of the apostles, than any other fact in the whole compass of history, sacred or profane. The credibility of evidence in all cases arises from the number, the information, and the veracity of the witnesses. The number of the witnesses in the present case, if we reckon only the eleven apostles (and many more might be reckoned), was far greater than has ever been deemed sufficient to establish a fact in a court of justice, in the most intricate and weighty causes. Their information upon the general point in question, "that our Lord was seen alive after his crucifixion," was the most complete that can be imagined. They could not be mistaken in his person, who had so long and so constantly attended him. The veracity of a witness is to be measured, not simply by the probity of his disposition and his habits of sincerity, but by the motives which circumstances may present to him, to adhere to the truth, or to deviate from it. No man deliberately propagates a lie, but for the sake of some pleasure or advantage to himself; and the advantage which a man pursues by falsehood, must always be something in the present world; his ease and security, or the advancement of his fame or fortune: for

no one who looks forward to a future state thinks that his interest there may be served by falsehood. It always, therefore, heightens the credit of a witness, if he is materially a sufferer by the testimony which he gives, when he could not suffer either in fortune, ease, or reputation, by a contrary testimony.

It is a singular circumstance in this testimony, that it is such as no length of time can diminish. It is founded upon the universal principles of human nature; upon maxims which are the same in all ages, and operate with equal strength in all mankind, under all the varieties of temper and habit of constitution. So long as it shall be contrary to the first principles of the human mind to delight in falsehood for its own sake; so long as it shall be true that no man willingly propagates a falsehood to his own detriment, and to no purpose,—so long it will be certain that the apostles were serious and sincere in the assertion of our Lord's resurrection. So long as it shall be absurd to suppose, that eleven men could all be deceived in the person of a friend with whom they had lived three years,—so long it will be certain that the apostles were competent to judge of the truth and reality of the fact which they asserted. So long as it shall be in the nature of man, for his own interest and ease to be dearer to him than that of another,—so long it will be an absurdity to suppose that twelve men should persevere for years in the joint attestation of a falsehood, to the great detriment of every individual of the conspiracy, and without any joint or separate advantage, when any one of them had it in his power, by a discovery of the fraud, to advance his own fame and fortune, by the sacrifice of nothing more dear to him than the reputation of

the rest; and so long will it be incredible that the history of our Lord's resurrection was a fiction, which the eleven men, to mention no greater number, with unparalleled fortitude, and with equal folly, conspired to support. So long, therefore, as the evangelical history shall be preserved entire, that is, so long as the historical books of the New Testament shall be extant in the world, so long the credibility of the apostles' testimony will remain whole and unimpaired. As this circumstance, to have in itself the principle of permanency, never happened to human testimony in such a degree in any other instance, this preservation of the form and integrity of the apostolical evidence, amidst all the storms and wrecks which human science, like all things human, has in the course of ages undergone, is, like the preservation of the Jewish nation, something of a standing miracle. It shows, in the original propagation of the Gospel, that contrivance and forecast in the plan, that power in the execution, which are far beyond the natural abilities of the human mind, and declares that the whole work and counsel was of God.

Before concluding this view of the apostolic testimony, the case of Judas must be reverted to. Judas had been placed by the Lord, from the beginning of his ministry, among the apostles. Thus Jesus admitted one from the first to be a constant witness and spy on his conduct. As Judas betrayed his Master, it is evident, that if he could have brought home any thing to his disadvantage, he would have done it in his own vindication. He would have appeared against him when, at his trial before the chief priests and elders, they were at so great a loss to prove that Jesus was a deceiver. But, although he had been so long with him,

not a word does he utter derogatory to the character of his Master.

The greatest enemy, with a choice of means for detection of fraud or collusion, could not have selected any thing better calculated to suit his purpose, than that of giving Judas a place among the apostles. It was a remarkable provision made by the Lord for increasing, to the highest point, the value of the testimony of the twelve apostles. It was like the water which Elijah commanded to be poured around the altar before the fire descended from heaven to consume the sacrifice. Judas also, as the other apostles, although in a different way, has sealed his testimony with his blood.

CHAPTER XV.

TESTIMONY OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS TO THE MESSIAH.

In addition to the testimony of the apostles to the truth of the Gospel, we have the corroborative evidence of the first Christians. The testimony of many of them is of the same nature with that of the apostles. It is the evidence of men who did not receive on tradition what they believed, but were eye-witnesses of its truth. This was more particularly the case with that numerous body of disciples who resided at Jerusalem; but it was not confined to them. The Lord Jesus Christ not only conferred on the apostles the power of

working miracles, in attestation of his divine mission, but that also of imparting miraculous gifts to the other disciples, by the laying on of their hands. John, who survived all the other apostles, did not leave the world till some time about the year 101. If persons of twenty years of age received those gifts by the imposition of his hands, and lived, as some of them in common course must have done, till they were seventy years old, this would carry us down to the year 150; and if others of twenty years of age saw them in possession of these gifts, and in their turn survived till they were seventy, this will bring us to about the year 200; but as that may be considered nearly the utmost limit, the general period to which eye-witnesses of the possession of miraculous powers might survive, may be reckoned about the year 150. In this way, from the time of the ascension of Jesus Christ, we have a period of above 100 years, during which miraculous gifts existed in those churches which the apostles had gathered or visited. Here, then, the testimony adduced is that of men who witnessed, and many of whom possessed, miraculous powers; so that they had the evidence of their senses in attestation of the truth of the Christian religion. Many of them, like the apostles, laid down their lives for that truth, and all of them endured the brunt of the fiercest persecution.

By the Book of Acts, published in the same age in which the transactions it records took place, we are informed, that when the apostles, at the feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, began openly to publish at Jerusalem that he was the Messiah, every effort was employed to repress them, and all Jerusalem was greatly agitated. The apostles

wrought many miracles, and the success of their doctrine was very considerable. About three thousand persons immediately joined themselves to them, and were baptized. Soon afterwards, "the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

One of the disciples, named Stephen, who had been chosen to the office of Deacon in the church, was now publicly put to death, and a general persecution was raised, by which the rest of the disciples, except the apostles, were scattered from Jerusalem. But so far from suppressing, this proved the means of propagating more widely the doctrine of Jesus Christ; and, within a few years after his death, there were numerous bodies of Christians collected in most of the principal cities of the Roman empire. That such societies existed in the apostolic age, and that they had been collected and were regulated by the doctrine taught by the apostles, is a fact beyond the reach of controversy.

Owing to the manner in which the New Testament Scriptures were at first published, as has been already detailed, the testimony given by the first Christians to the truth of their contents is placed in the strongest light. For nothing can stamp such a character of authenticity on writings, as their being addressed to, and acknowledged by, persons, who themselves have been witnesses of the transactions that are appealed to, and which are so interwoven with the facts they are called to believe, that it is impossible to separate the one from the other. The facts recorded in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, form the basis of all that the Epistles to the churches contain.

These Epistles are addressed to the churches on particular occasions, conveying, as was needful, exhortation, instruction, reproof, or consolation. They enter into a detail of errors into which they had fallen, of faults which they had committed, and of various particulars in their conduct. Individuals are spoken of by name, sometimes to their honour, and at other times with disapprobation. The writer frequently refers to their immediate situation, and to his own conduct and circumstances while dwelling in the midst of them. Sometimes he is compelled to remind them of the ungrateful treatment he had experienced, and of his own upright and disinterested behaviour, without any temporal remuneration. They are appealed to as eye-witnesses of the miracles he performed, and of the miraculous gifts bestowed upon some among themselves. Could societies of men be deceived in regard to these things? Could they be imposed on by being summoned as witnesses of what they never saw, or as being subjects of trials and sufferings they had never felt? Would they bear to be reprehended for faults they had never committed; to be admonished as to errors into which they had never fallen? The supposition is absurd; the very nature of the Epistles to the first churches carries at once irrefragable evidence of the integrity of those who wrote them, and of the competency of the persons to whom they were addressed to judge of the truth of their contents.

For the sincerity of the persons who thus received and acknowledged these Epistles, we have the most unequivocal pledges that human nature can afford. All of them, in consequence of adopting the truths

contained in these writings, had changed their several religions in which they had been brought up, had renounced their former habits and modes of living, and had incurred the risk of the loss of life, property, and every thing dear to mankind. Many of them had joyfully submitted to the spoiling of their goods, and all of them had, in one way or other, become "partakers of the afflictions of the gospel." When men thus renounce their strongest prejudices, and act in opposition to their best immediate interests, they will carefully examine the grounds on which they are proceeding.

One thing more may be added, which, affording the strongest corroborative evidence, precludes all possibility of collusion. Divisions from the beginning obtained in the churches. In the first Epistle of Paul to the church at Corinth, he tells them he had been informed there were contentions among them, and that every one of them said, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ; and he charges them with envying and strife. In this situation, when all were watching each other, is it to be imagined that reproofs or instructions would be submitted to, without the strictest examination, or that the integrity of the writings they received would not be scrutinized with the utmost vigilance? Various sects also soon sprang up, who separated from the first churches, but who received as divine truth the same writings, to which, in their disputes, they all appealed. It furnishes a melancholy view of human nature, that such divisions, in almost endless variety, have continued to the present day. But nothing can be imagined that would be equally efficacious in stamp-

ing the character of truth on facts, which all in the first churches had a full opportunity as well as the deepest interest to ascertain, and which, both in their agreements and in their discords, they all unanimously attest.

But the 3000 disciples who first joined themselves to the apostles at Jerusalem, in the face of the opposition that was then raised, are witnesses especially entitled to the fullest credit. Peter, in his first address, charged them with having taken, and with wicked hands crucified and slain the Messiah. From what they afterwards heard and saw, they were convinced of their guilt, and became themselves the disciples of Christ. They were eye-witnesses of the miracles which the apostles performed "in the temple," and in "the streets" of Jerusalem, where multitudes of sick people, brought from the neighbouring country, were publicly healed. Soon after, on account of their adherence to the faith, "a great persecution" was raised against them, and "Paul made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison." They were in consequence obliged to flee from Jerusalem. These persons living at the very fountain of information, both as to time and place, who did not receive the matter on hearsay, but whose senses were all along appealed to, and who gave such pledges of their conviction and sincerity, must be accounted credible witnesses.

Not only did the first disciples at Jerusalem suffer persecution, it was also the lot of all the first churches as soon as they were collected. The persecutions and afflictive trials they endured, both from the Jews and Heathens, are frequently and pointedly mentioned in

those Epistles which were written to them by the apostles. "To you," says Paul to the Christians at Philippi, "it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." "Ye, brethren," says the same apostle to the believers at Thessalonica, "became followers of the churches of God which, in Judea, are in Christ Jesus; for ye also suffered like things of *your own countrymen*, even as they have of the *Jews*." "Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." "We ourselves glory in you, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom for which ye also suffer." To the believing Hebrews he says, "Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." What stronger pledges could we have of the sincerity of these persons among whom the apostles laboured, and in whose presence they had manifested those miraculous powers which are appealed to in the same Epistles, and which were of a character that could not be mistaken? These Epistles, too, were publicly read in the churches every first day of the week; so that the facts they contained were submitted to the examination of enemies as well as of friends.

We receive, then, from these first churches in the principal cities of the Roman empire, irrefragable testimony to those facts on which Christianity is founded; a testimony, be it remarked, delivered in the presence of their enemies, and at the price of their own blood.

The following account of the death of Polycarp at Smyrna, and of the persecution of the Churches at Lyons and Vienne, in France, will afford a specimen of what Christians in the next age had to encounter in adhering to their religion. Polycarp, as has been already noticed, was one of the Christian writers contemporary with the apostles, who was himself acquainted with the apostle John, and had conversed with many who had seen Christ. He suffered death for the Christian religion in the year 167 or 168, in the reign of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus, the philosopher, in what is called the fourth persecution.

Some time after the death of Polycarp, the Christians at Smyrna sent an account of that event in a letter, from which the following is an extract, to the Christians at Philadelphia, Philomelium, and other places, who had expressed a desire to receive it from eye-witnesses. "The church of God which is at Smyrna, to the church at Philomelium, and to all the congregations of the holy universal church in every place, the mercy, and peace, and love of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ be multiplied. We have written to you, brethren, concerning those who have suffered martyrdom, and particularly concerning the blessed Polycarp, who, by his martyrdom, as it were, sealed up, and put an end to the persecution." After which, says Eusebius, "before they speak of Polycarp, they relate the sufferings of the other martyrs, describing

their constancy under the torments which they endured; and how all who stood round them were astonished, seeing them scourged till their veins and arteries were laid bare, and even their entrails became visible; after which they were laid upon the shells of sea-fish, and upon sharp spikes fixed in the ground, with many other kinds of torture: In the end they were cast to the wild beasts, to be devoured by them. They are particular in the account of the generous Germanicus, who, being corroborated by Divine grace, overcame the fear of death implanted in the nature of men. For when the proconsul advised him to think of his youth, and to spare himself, and not throw away his life in his flourishing age, he was not at all moved thereby, but, as they say, he enticed and stimulated the wild beasts to approach him, that he might be the sooner dismissed from this evil world. Presently after that glorious exit, the whole multitude cried out, 'Away with the impious; let Polycarp be sought for.' There following then a great noise and tumult, and having in view the wild beasts, and other tortures, Quintus, a Phrygian, was intimidated and gave way, as did also some others with him, who, without a truly religious fear, had rashly presented themselves before the tribunal.

"When the admirable Polycarp heard of the demand made for him he was not at all disturbed, but continued to be in a firm and composed temper of mind; and he resolved to stay in the city. Nevertheless, at length, he so far complied with the request of his friends, as to retire to a country-house not far off, where he abode with a small company, spending the time, night and day, in continual prayer to God, offering up supplications for the peace of the churches throughout the

world, which, indeed, was his constant usage. In a short time, his pursuers, by informations given them, were led to the place where Polycarp was. Coming thither in the evening, they found him resting in an upper room, whence it was not difficult for him to remove to another house; but he would not, saying, 'the will of the Lord be done.' He then went down to the men, and talked to them in a free and cheerful manner, and ordered meat to be set before them, begging that they would allow him the space of one hour, in which he might pray without disturbance. Prayer being ended, they set him upon an ass, to carry him into the city. As they were going, he was met by Herod the Irenarch, and his father Nicetas, who took him up into their chariot. As they sat together, they endeavoured to persuade him, saying, 'What harm is it to say Lord Cæsar, and to sacrifice, and so to be safe?' At first, he made no answer; but when they were importunate, he said, 'I will never do what you advise.' They then began to reproach him, and thrust him out of the chariot so hastily, that, in getting down, his leg was bruised; but he got up, and went on cheerfully, as if he had suffered no harm, till he came to the stadium.

"When he was brought before the tribunal, there was a great shout of the multitude. As he came near, the proconsul asked him if he was Polycarp. Upon his confessing that he was, he endeavoured to persuade him to deny Christ; and said, 'Reverence thy age,' and other like things customary with them; 'Swear by the fortune of Cæsar—repent—say, Away with the impious.' The governor still urging him, and saying, 'Swear, and I will dismiss thee; reproach Christ,'

Polycarp then answered: 'Fourscore and six years have I served him, and he has never done me any injury: How can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?' The governor was still urgent, saying, 'Swear by the fortune of Cæsar.' Whereupon Polycarp answered, 'How can you desire this of me, as if you did not know who I am? Hear me then openly professing I am a Christian. And if you have a mind to know the doctrine of Christianity, appoint me a day and I will inform you.' The proconsul said, 'I have wild beasts, and I will cast you to them, unless you change your mind.' But he answered, 'Call for them, there can be no alteration from good to bad, but it is good to change from vice to virtue.' He said again to him, 'Since you do not mind the beasts, I will order you to be consumed by fire unless you repent.' Polycarp said, 'You threaten me with fire which burns for an hour, and then is extinguished; but you are ignorant of the fire of the future judgment and everlasting punishment reserved for the wicked. But why do you delay? Appoint which you please.'

"The proconsul then sent the crier to make proclamation thrice in the midst of the stadium, 'Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian.' That proclamation having been made by the crier, the whole multitude of the Gentiles and Jews inhabiting Smyrna, with furious rage, and in a loud voice, cried out, 'This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods, who teacheth all men not to sacrifice nor to worship them.' Having uttered these words, they cried out, and requested Philip the Asiarch to let out a lion upon Polycarp. He said he could not do that, because the amphitheatrical shows of wild

beasts were over. Then they cried out, with one consent, that Polycarp should be burnt alive; which was no sooner said then done; all immediately joining together in bringing wood, and dried branches of trees, from the shops and the baths; the Jews also, according to their custom, assisting with the greatest forwardness.

"Now all things being prepared and put in order for the pile, when they were about to nail him to the stake, he said, 'Let me be as I am. He that enables me to bear the fire, will enable me also to remain unmoved within the pile, without your fastening me with nails.' They therefore did not nail him, but only bound him. He then offered up a prayer to God, which he concluded, saying aloud, Amen. Then the officers who had the charge of it kindled the fire. But Polycarp's body not being so soon consumed as expected, the people desired that the confector* should be called for, and run him through with a sword. The faithful were now very desirous to have his body delivered to them; but some there were who moved Nicetas, father to Herod, to go to the governor to prevent his giving the body to the believers, lest, as they said, they should leave him that was crucified to worship this man. This they said at the suggestion of the Jews, who also diligently watched us that we might not carry off the body; little considering that we can never forsake Christ, who has suffered for the salvation of all men. Him we worship as the Son of God. The martyrs we love as the disciples and imitators of

* An officer, whose business it was, in the Roman games, to despatch any wild beast that was unruly or dangerous.

the Lord. The centurion, therefore, perceiving the perverseness of the Jews, caused the body to be brought forth, and burned it. We then gathered up his bones, and deposited them in a proper place. This is our account of the blessed Polycarp, who, together with those of Philadelphia, was the twelfth who suffered martyrdom at Smyrna."

The persecution of the churches at Lyons and Vienne took place in the year 177. "It was the seventeenth year," says Eusebius, "of the Emperor Antoninus, in which time the persecution against us raged with great violence in several parts of the world, through the enmity of the people in the cities. What vast multitudes of martyrs there were throughout the whole empire, may be concluded from what happened in one nation: which also have been committed to writing, that they may be delivered to others, and may be always remembered. The whole history of these things has been inserted in our work of the collection of martyrs, of which I here select a part.

"The country in which those things happened, of which I am now to speak, is Gaul, in which are two great and famous cities, Lyons and Vienne both washed by the river Rhone, which traverseth that country with a rapid stream. These famous churches sent, in writing, an account of their martyrs to the churches in Asia and Phrygia. I shall insert their own words: 'The servants of Jesus Christ dwelling in Vienne and Lyons, to the brethren in Asia and Phrygia, who have the same faith and hope of redemption with us, peace, and grace, and glory from God the Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.' After a few things said in the way of preface, they begin the narrative in these words:—

"'The greatness of the affliction in these places, the excessive rage of the people against the saints, and what the blessed martyrs have endured, we are not able to describe in words, nor put down in writing; for the enemy at the very first invaded us with the greatest violence, showing from the beginning what sore evils we were to expect. Every thing was done to exercise his ministers, and to train them to the practice of the utmost cruelty against the servants of God. We were not only excluded from houses,' (of friends, as it seems,) 'and from the baths and markets, but we were forbidden to appear in any place whatever. However, the grace of God fought for us against the enemy; delivering such as were weak, and setting up the pillars, which were firm and stable, and able, by their patience and fortitude, to withstand all the force of the enemy. They therefore came to a near combat with him, undergoing all manner of reproach and suffering. Accounting the greatest afflictions to be small, they hastened to Christ; thus showing, in fact, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, Rom. viii. 18. First, then, they courageously endured the insults of the multitude gathered together about them in crowds, their shouts and blows, and draggings about, pillaging their goods, throwing of stones, confinement to their dwellings, and all such things as an enraged multitude is wont to practise against adversaries and enemies. Then, being brought into the market by the tribune and the chief magistrates of the city, they were examined before all the people; and having made their confession, they were shut up in prison till the arrival of the president.

"'Afterwards, when they were brought before the president, who exercised all manner of cruelty against us, Vetius Epagathus, one of the brethren, full of love towards God and his neighbour, whose course of life also was so perfect, that, though a young man, he might deserve the character of old Zacharias, Luke i. 6, that he walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, and was unwearied in the performance of all good offices to his neighbour, being full of zeal for God, and fervent in spirit, Rom. xii. 11; he being such an one, was not able to bear these so unjust proceedings against us; but being moved with indignation, requested that he might be allowed to make a defence in behalf of the brethren, and show that nothing impious and irreligious was done by us. But they who were near the tribunal cried out against him, (for he was a person well known,) and the president refused to grant his request, though so reasonable, and asked him whether he was a Christian. He, answering with a loud voice that he was a Christian, was put into the number of the martyrs, and was called the advocate of the Christians. And indeed he had within him the Advocate, the Holy Ghost, in a greater measure than Zacharias, Luke i. 67, which he also showed by the abundance of his love, being willing to lay down his own life in defence of the brethren, 1 John, iii. 16. For he was and is a genuine disciple of Christ, following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, Rev. xiv. 4.

"'After this, others were chosen out, and they proved to be illustrious and well prepared proto-martyrs, who, with all alacrity of mind, accomplished the solemn confession of martyrdom. They also were manifest

who were unprepared, and unexercised, and still weak, and not able to bear the shock of so great a combat, of whom about ten in number fell away, causing in us great grief, and immeasurable concern; and damping the alacrity of those who were not yet apprehended; of whom, however, it must be acknowledged, that they kept company with the martyrs, and did not forsake them, though they suffered considerably in so doing. At that time we were all in great consternation, being uncertain about the event of this confession: not dreading the torments that might be inflicted upon us, but apprehensive of the issue, and that some might fall in the trial. However, from day to day, such were taken up as were worthy to supply the number of such as had gone off, so that the most eminent men of the two churches, and by whom good order had been settled among us, were picked out and brought together. Moreover, some Gentile servants of our people were apprehended; for the governor had given public orders for making strict enquiries after us. They, at the instigation of Satan, and dreading the torments which they saw the saints suffer, the soldiers also exciting them to it, falsely charged us with having the suppers of Thyestes, and the incestuous mixture of Oedipus, and other such like things, which it is not lawful for us to mention nor think of, nor to believe that they were ever done among men. These stories being spread abroad, all men were incensed against us; insomuch that if any there were who before had been civil to us upon account of affinity or friendship, they were then much offended, and exclaimed against us. And then was fulfilled what the Lord had said, John xvi. 2, 'That the time would come when every

one who killeth you will think that he doeth God service.'

" ' After that, the holy martyrs underwent such torments as are above all description, Satan doing his utmost to make them also to say such impious things,' (or to confess what had been declared by the heathen servants;) ' but the utmost excess of rage of the multitude, and of the president, and of the soldiers, fell upon Sanctus, deacon at Vienne; and upon Maturus, newly baptized indeed, yet a most valiant champion; and upon Attalus, a native of Pergamos, who always was a pillar and support of the churches here; and upon Blandina, by whom Christ showed that those things which among men seem mean, base, and contemptible, are by God accounted worthy of great honour for their love toward him, which is evidently manifested in great power, and not in appearance only boasted of. —It was a refreshment and ease to her, and an abatement of the torments inflicted upon her, to say, ' I am a Christian, nor is there any wickedness practised among us.'

" ' Pothinus, who was intrusted with the administration of the episcopal office at Lyons, being more than ninety years of age, and very weak in body, and scarcely breathing by reason of his bodily infirmity, but strengthened in mind with a desire of the martyrdom now in view, even he also was dragged to the tribunal. His body was worn out by age and distemper, but his soul yet remained in him, that by it Christ might triumph. He being brought before the tribunal by the soldiers, the city magistrates also attending, and the multitude hooting him all along with loud shouts, as if he had been Christ himself, exhibited a good testimony. Being

asked by the president, 'Who was the God of the Christians?' he answered, 'If you are worthy, you shall know.' After that he was dragged about in an inhuman manner, and received many blows, they who were near him striking him with their hands and their feet, without any respect to his age; they who stood farther off threw at him whatever came to hand, every one thinking himself guilty of an offence against religion if he did not offer him some abuse, for hereby they thought they should avenge their gods. And when there was scarcely any breath left in him, he was cast into prison, where after two days he expired.

"'Maturus, then, and Sanctus, and Blandina, and Attalus, were brought to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre, to be a public spectacle to the inhumanity of the Gentiles; a day for combat of wild beasts having been purposely granted upon our account. And Maturus and Sanctus did again undergo all sorts of torments in the amphitheatre, as if they had before suffered nothing at all; or rather, having already overcome the adversary in many encounters, and being now to contend for the crown itself, they again endured in the way to it the accustomed blows of the place, and the tearings of the wild beasts, and whatever else the mad multitude from all sides called for and demanded; and, after all these things, the iron chair upon which, when their bodies were broiled, they yielded the offensive smell of burnt flesh. Nor were they yet satisfied, but were still more enraged, being earnestly desirous to overcome the patience of the sufferers. However, they could get nothing from Sanctus more than the confession which he had made at the first. These two, therefore (Maturus and Sanctus), having undergone a severe

combat, their life having continued a long while, they were at last slain, having been made throughout that day a spectacle to the world, instead of all that variety which is usually exhibited in the combats of gladiators, (1 Cor. iv. 9.) But Blandina, after she had been scourged, after she had been exposed to wild beasts, and after the iron chair, she was enclosed in a net, and thrown to a bull; having been often tossed by the beast, she also was run through with a sword.

" ' Now Attalus was earnestly called for by the multitude, for indeed he was an eminent person, and, by reason of the clearness of his conscience, came forth as a champion prepared for the combat; for he was well exercised in the Christian discipline, and was always a witness of the truth among us. He was led round the amphitheatre, with a board carried before him, upon which was inscribed, in the Roman tongue, ' This is Attalus the Christian,' the people all the while expressing great indignation against him. The president, understanding that he was a Roman, commanded him to be taken away, and to be carried to the rest who were in prison, concerning whom he had sent to Cæsar, and was in expectation of an answer.—The rescript of Cæsar was, that they who confessed Christ should be put to death; but that, if any denied themselves to be Christians, they might be set at liberty.

" ' The public assembly of this place being now begun, at which there is a vast concourse of people from all parts, the president ordered the blessed martyrs to be brought before the tribunal, exposing them as a public show to the multitude. Having again interrogated them, as many as he found to be Roman citizens he ordered to be beheaded, the rest to be sent to the

wild beasts. But Christ was greatly glorified in those who before had denied the faith, but now, contrary to the expectation of the Gentiles, confessed themselves to be Christians. They were interrogated apart, as being now to be dismissed, and set at liberty; but making confession, they were added to the number of the martyrs.—Attalus, when he was set in the iron chair, and was scorched all over, and an offensive smell of burnt flesh proceeded from his body, spoke to the multitude in the Roman tongue. 'This,' says he, 'is to devour men, which is your practice. As for us, we neither devour men, nor do we commit any other wickedness whatever.' Being asked what is the name of God? he answered, 'God has not a name, as men have.'

"Those who had been suffocated in prison, they cast to the dogs, carefully watching them day and night, lest any of us should inter them. Then they laid out the remainder of the bodies left unconsumed by the fire, partly torn, and partly burnt, and the heads of the rest, with the trunks of their bodies; all these they kept unburied, with a guard of soldiers many days. Some were filled with indignation, and gnashed with their teeth at the dead, as if desirous to be farther revenged upon them. Some insulted over them, and derided them, at the same time extolling their idols, and attributing to them the punishment that had been inflicted on the martyrs. Some who were more mild, and seemed in some measure to sympathize with us, nevertheless upbraided us, saying, 'Where is their God, and of what benefit has their religion been to them, which they have preferred above their lives?' In the mean time, we were greatly concerned that we

could not bury the bodies in the earth, for neither did the darkness of the night afford us any assistance, nor would money persuade, nor entreaties prevail; but they continued to watch the bodies very carefully, as if some great matter were to be gained by their not being buried. The bodies, therefore, of the martyrs having undergone all manner of ignominy, and having lain exposed to the air six days, were burnt, and having been reduced to ashes by these impious men, were by them thrown into the river Rhone, which runs hard by, that no remains of them might be any longer visible on this earth. Thus they acted as if they could be too hard for God, and prevent their reviviscence, or, as they themselves said, that they might have no hope of a resurrection, trusting to which they have brought in among us a strange and new religion, and despising the heaviest sufferings, are ready to meet death with cheerfulness. Let us now see whether they will rise again, and whether their God is able to help them, and to deliver them out of our hands.'"

The above persecutions, it will be observed, happened under Marcus Antoninus the philosopher, one of the most celebrated of the Roman emperors. His rescript bore, *that they who confessed Christ should be put to death*, but that if any denied themselves to be Christians, they might be set at liberty. By the edict of Trajan, such Christians as were brought before a governor's tribunal, and were convicted, were to be put to death, though they were not to be sought for. But the President at Lyons issued public orders, that strict search should be made for them. Attalus was a Roman citizen, and ought to have been beheaded; but, being a Christian, this privilege was not granted.

The multitude demanded that he should be tortured, and thrown to wild beasts; and the President yielded to their request, relying undoubtedly upon impunity, though he acted contrary to law. Such was the condition of Christians at that time.*

The attestation furnished to the truth of the Gospel by these sufferers, in that early age, is very important. Irenæus, an elder in the church at Lyons, was in his younger days acquainted with Polycarp, the disciple of John the Apostle; and Pothinus, Bishop at Lyons, was older than Irenæus. We have here, too, a proof of the great progress of the Christian religion in a short time. The number of Christians at Lyons and Vienne must have been very considerable. There were among them men of distinction for knowledge and understanding. Attalus, and several others, were Roman citizens.

The testimony of the first Christians is the more valuable, as it is given by men of all ranks in society,

* We have here a melancholy exhibition of "the persecuting spirit of Pagans," and are reminded of Mr Gibbon's declaration, that "during the whole course of his reign, Marcus despised the Christians as a philosopher, and punished them as a sovereign." And we are again brought to recollect Mr Hume's assertions respecting Pagan toleration, which, in connexion with the above facts, may prove a useful warning to those who read his Essays, and convince them that no dependence whatever is to be placed on his most confident assertions when the Christian religion is concerned. "The intolerance," he says, "of almost all religions which have maintained the unity of God, is as remarkable as the *contrary* PRINCIPLE *of Polytheists.*" And again, "The tolerating spirit of idolaters, both in ancient and modern times, is very obvious to any one who is the least conversant in the writings of historians or travellers!"

and of all the different countries through which they were scattered. It is the testimony of men who had the deepest interest in not being deceived, of men who were not guided by any civil authority, or worldly consideration, in the religion they embraced, but solely by the force of truth and irresistible conviction. It is the testimony of those who were competent to judge of the evidence by which they were convinced—evidence presented to them in facts of which they were eye-witnesses, and in which they could not be mistaken. It is testimony transmitted to us from the most enlightened period of the Roman empire,—from a multitude of men whose integrity is acknowledged by their enemies, and from among whom individuals may be selected, in all respects as enlightened as any of their contemporaries.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES AND FIRST CHRISTIANS IS NOT OPPOSED BY ANY CONTRADICTORY TESTIMONY.

THE Christian religion is founded on facts. With these it was inseparably connected at its first appearance; and if they could be proved to be false, the whole system would fall to the ground. The advent and life of Jesus Christ, the miracles publicly performed by him while on earth, together with those wrought by his apostles after his death, were matters of fact, not only asserted, but also so indubitably believed by

his first followers, that they shed their blood in attestation of the sincerity with which they were persuaded of their truth. Immediately after the death of Christ, these facts were publicly and boldly asserted by his servants in the very city where they had taken place. At length being driven from Jerusalem, they published the report of them without delay, and with great effect, through every corner of the Roman empire. Within a few years, the apostles likewise dispersed abroad a number of writings, containing a full account of these facts, and also of the means they had employed to propagate them, declaring both their own success and the opposition they had encountered. The subject was of the greatest importance, both to the present and future interests of mankind. If the report of the apostles was true, all the other religions in the world were false, and even the Jewish economy must be set aside. The interest, therefore, which would be felt in every country to oppose and suppress this new religion, is sufficiently manifest.

Accordingly, the most violent opposition was everywhere excited. Jews and Heathens joined hand in hand in ridiculing and defaming, in reasoning against and persecuting, in imprisoning and putting to death, those who propagated and adhered to the faith of Christianity. But one method they did not employ, —they *did not contradict the facts*. So far from being contradicted, the *facts* and the *miracles* on which the evidence of Christianity rests were *on all hands admitted*, and reasoned on both by Jews and Gentiles.

Nothing, in such circumstances, but *truth*, could have commanded such acquiescence. A contrary state-

ment, by authority of the Jewish or Roman governments, to the writings of the apostles, which were so widely circulated, would have done more to check the progress of the Christian religion, and its future increase, than all the reasonings of the philosophers, and all the persecuting edicts of the Roman emperors. We are, therefore, certain, that such a contradiction would have been attempted, if, in opposition to facts so well established, it could have been expected to obtain any weight, without recoiling upon its authors with disgrace. But nothing of this kind appeared. In none of the public edicts for suppressing Christianity; in none of the controversies or disputes concerning it, is the falsehood of the Gospel history ever for a moment surmised. The philosophers, who avowedly wrote against the Christian religion, had recourse to the Gospels themselves, which they allowed to be authentic, for confuting the opinions they contain. And NOT THE SMALLEST VESTIGE OF ANY CONTRADICTORY STATEMENT, EITHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE, IS TO BE FOUND IN ALL ANTIQUITY.

Thus the four Gospels were acknowledged, from the beginning, by friends and foes, as the authentic and genuine productions of the persons whose names they bore, when it was so easy a matter to have proved them spurious and false, had they been so, especially as all the civil power was in the hands of enemies.

The Scriptures, too, were so written, that detection, in case of error or fraud, was inevitable. The events they relate are detailed with the greatest minuteness as to time, place, and circumstances, connected with numerous public facts, and names of public men. The occasions also on which the miracles were wrought

are stated, and the names of the persons who were the subjects of them,—some of them well-known characters,—with their places of abode, are often given, — while the general facts respecting Jesus Christ, as claiming to be the Messiah, were of the most public nature, connected with the government, and involving the interests and characters of the whole Jewish nation, especially of the chief men and rulers.

Every thing, besides, was carried on openly, not in remote countries, among ignorant and barbarous people, but first in Jerusalem, which was the principal scene of action, and afterwards in Rome, and the chief cities of the empire. As this is the acknowledged fact, we may here borrow some assistance from Mr Hume, to show what would *certainly* have been the issue had there been any fallacy in the case. Speaking, in his Essay on Miracles, of the impostor Alexander, he says, " 'Twas a wise policy in that cunning impostor, Alexander, who, though now forgotten, was once so famous, to lay the first scene of his imposture in Paphlagonia, where, as Lucian tells us, the people were extremely ignorant and stupid, and ready to swallow even the grossest delusion. Had Alexander fixed his residence at Athens, the philosophers of that renowned mart of learning had immediately spread, through the whole Roman empire, their sense of the matter, which, being supported by so great authority, and displayed by all the force of reasoning and eloquence, had entirely opened the eyes of mankind." Every one will agree with Mr Hume, that this would unquestionably have been the result; and as one of the apostles did appear in Athens, " that renowned

mart of learning," and did there publicly proclaim his doctrine in the face of all the philosophers who "encountered him," let Mr Hume's successors—the whole host of modern infidels—explain, if they be able, why and how it happened, that, although this apostle exposed the superstition of these philosophers, in erecting an altar "to the unknown God," and charged them with "*ignorantly*" worshipping him. they did not *immediately spread through the whole Roman empire their sense of the matter, supported by their great authority, and displayed by all the force of reasoning and eloquence, and so entirely open the eyes of mankind.* Here, then, the truth of the Christian religion is brought to a test, proposed by one of its bitterest and most acute opponents, and on the ground he himself has chosen, his confutation is complete.

The Jews and Greeks, however much they differed in every thing else, were united in their opposition to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But it was to the arrogance of philosophy, that, above all, it was offensive. The vain-glorious spirit fostered by the corrupt science of Greece and Rome, was peculiarly hostile to the humbling doctrine of the Cross. The boasters of wisdom, the sages who pretended to bring human nature to its utmost perfection, could not brook that religion which not only disclaimed their authority, but loudly denounced their unsoundness. Why, then, did not the philosophers, who, by every means in their power, so violently opposed Christianity from its first appearance—why did not they contradict the facts contained in the Gospels, and in the Apostolic Epistles, which were in the hands of the Christians in different coun-

tries, and publicly read in their assemblies? The only answer that can be given is, that these facts were too notorious to admit of contradiction.

In order to judge of the strength of evidence that arises to Christianity, from the universal admission of those facts on which its truth is founded, it is necessary to take a view of the situation in which the Jewish rulers, and also others in authority, were placed by their publication.

The apostles asserted in the face of the world, that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah promised in the Jewish Scriptures, and that in Him all the prophecies were fulfilled. They also declared the reception he met with, and the means by which he was opposed. The publication of these things necessarily involved a full exposure of the characters, as well as of the conduct of the Jewish rulers, who were openly denounced as perverters of those Scriptures of which they had been appointed the keepers, and which they professed to teach, and were declared to be blind guides, and totally unqualified for the station they held. In the writings of the New Testament, the character of the Scribes and Pharisees was exhibited in the most odious light, yet they never attempted to refute the account in which the charges were made. They were represented as hypocrites, occupied with maintaining a fair outward appearance, while their hearts were full of covetousness and all kinds of uncleanness, as devouring widows' houses, and *for a pretence* making long prayers. It was affirmed that they had minutely scrutinized some of the miracles of Jesus, and were filled with rage because these investigations only tended more completely to establish their truth. They were even charged

with consulting to put to death a man who was raised from the dead, in order to counteract the effect this miracle had produced. Other miracles, it was asserted, they themselves witnessed, which Jesus Christ publicly wrought in the temple, upon his assuming an authority in it which they could not resist, and just after he had made a public entry into Jerusalem, accompanied by circumstances which pointed out the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy, in a way that could not be evaded. It was shown that on many occasions they attempted to reason with him, alleging passages of Scripture, which they perverted, to entangle him; but that they were always foiled, and were themselves confuted. At other times, when he put questions to them, being unable to answer him, that they were compelled, before the people, to admit by their silence, that they were unfit to be teachers; that sometimes they laid snares to entrap him in his words; but that their artifices uniformly recoiled on themselves, so that at last they were afraid to ask him any more questions. Their conduct was such that he had publicly declared they were serpents, a generation of vipers, who could not escape the damnation of hell. Roused to the highest pitch of indignation, on account of the humiliating situation in which they found themselves placed, and the danger which menaced their power, they took measures to put him to death. They bribed, it was affirmed, one of his followers to betray him, procured false witnesses to accuse him, and obtained a sentence of condemnation against him, granted by the Roman governor with reluctance, and against his conscience. After crucifying him, they procured a guard of Roman soldiers to be stationed at his tomb, to watch the body

till the third day, on which he had declared he would rise again. It was asserted that the guard, terrified by the supernatural event of his resurrection, and the awful grandeur of its accompanying circumstances, fled from the place, and reported what had happened at the sepulchre; but that, bribed into a denial of the fact, and under promise of immunity from the consequences of such an unwonted breach of discipline, they undertook to assert that his disciples had conveyed away the body while they slept at their post. This exposure of the transcendant baseness of the Jewish rulers, was incessantly circulated, both in Jerusalem, and in all the principal cities of the Roman empire. And had it been in their power to refute such charges of aggravated corruption and wickedness, assuredly no possible means would have been left untried.

No other instance in the history of the world can be given, in which the dignitaries of any state were ever placed in circumstances so unpleasant and disgraceful as those in which the Jewish rulers found themselves, both in their public and private capacities. Accordingly we discover, that they employed every means in their power to relieve themselves from the disagreeable situation in which they were placed. They were adversaries so unprincipled, that they would have scrupled at nothing that would promise, in the smallest degree, to serve their purpose. They did not even hesitate to suborn false witnesses, or to commit murder. And Justin Martyr expressly charges them with having sent chosen men to every part of the Roman empire, who gave out that the Christians were Atheists, and raised all manner of calumnies against them. It is easy then to perceive, that the

desire of these rulers was as great as their inducement was strong, to do the utmost in their power to discredit what was thus publicly laid to their charge. One only expedient, however, they left untried, although that was the most obvious, the easiest, and, on the supposition of their innocence, the most effectual method of exculpating themselves—the denial of the facts. But the only instance in which they attempted any thing resembling a statement contradictory to that of the apostles, appears in the story of the guard at the sepulchre, which contains its own confutation. Had the soldiers, through such criminal neglect as was ascribed to them, actually allowed the body to be stolen, and thus have occasioned to the Jewish rulers so great a disappointment; had it been the conduct of the military guard that caused such consequences as resulted from the impossibility of producing the body after the third day, we may be assured that the rulers would have been the first to have demanded the infliction of that punishment which, by the Roman laws, must inevitably have followed so glaring a violation of military duty. This indeed is so clear, that it is worthy of remark, the rulers did not use any effectual means to contradict the confutation of their statement, which the apostles so soon afterwards publicly circulated. They went, however, as far as was in their power; and absurd as is the story they propagated, it will not be easy to find a better suited for their purpose. But the fact was thus expressly admitted, that notwithstanding all the precautions they had taken of sealing the sepulchre, and setting a watch, the body was gone.

The nature of the facts charged against these rulers

was such that, if even partially unfounded, they could have been easily disproved. For instance, it was publicly circulated, that on the appearance of strangers from the East enquiring for the Messiah, the chief priests and scribes were summoned by Herod the King, to inform him from the prophetical books where he should be born ; that Herod, in consequence, murdered all the young children in Bethlehem ; that John the Baptist pointed out Jesus as the Messiah ; that Jesus Christ performed many miracles throughout Judea, and also in presence of the rulers ; that the apostles having publicly healed a man, well known in Jerusalem, who had been lame from his birth, the magistrates called them before the council, and commanded them to speak no more in the name of Jesus ; that on this memorable occasion the apostles replied in these words : " Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom *ye crucified*, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole." And further, it was asserted, that when " beholding the man who was healed standing by them, the rulers could say nothing against it ;" on the contrary, that they said to one another, " What shall we do to these men ? for that indeed a notable miracle has been done by them, *is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem ; and* WE CANNOT DENY IT."

When multitudes of sick people were afterwards brought from the country, and in the name of Jesus publicly healed in the streets of Jerusalem, the high

priests and the Sadducees cast the apostles into the common prison. On the following day, when the prisoners were sent for to appear before the council, which had been specially summoned for the purpose, the messengers reported that they had found the prison securely shut, and the keepers before the doors, but no man within. Soon after, the council sent for them to the Temple, where they heard that they were publicly teaching, and brought them without violence, for fear of the people. The apostles then openly accused them of having put to death the Messiah, and declared themselves witnesses that God had raised him from the dead; but notwithstanding this, by the advice of Gamaliel, one of the council, as contained in his speech, which is also recorded by the apostles, the alleged offenders were immediately dismissed.

These were memorable public facts, which, if untrue, could, with the greatest ease and certainty have been proved to be false. Why then did not the Jewish rulers as publicly and solemnly deny them, as they were publicly and solemnly laid to their charge? Such specified facts, if unfounded, or if even only partially true, could have been set aside at once, especially by men who were backed by all the power of the state; and nothing can account for their tacit admission of the whole, but that their notoriety rendered a contradiction hopeless.

But besides their character, the rank, the power, and every thing connected with the official stations of the Jewish rulers, were all at stake. If this new doctrine were true and successful, it necessarily involved the abolition of the whole Mosaic economy, of which they were the priests and governors. Of this they were

fully aware. For, on hearing of the raising of Lazarus by Jesus from the dead, "the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, What do we? *for this man doeth many miracles.* If we let him alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come, and take away *both our place* and our nation." This too was publicly circulated by the apostles.

The Jewish rulers, who were in every way most deeply implicated both in character and interest, and who themselves *witnessed* on the spot the whole progress of the affair, were best qualified to detect any fraud in the case, if such there had been. But so far from contradicting, they are cited, we see, as witnesses in the writings of the apostles, published in their own age and country, and made to avow to the world the truth of the miracles, and to authenticate the whole train of the history. Here, then, we have not merely their *silence*, but their *testimony*. That men, possessed of all the power of government for nearly forty years after the charges by the apostles were publicly preferred against them, should have suffered such facts, if not so manifestly true as to admit of no refutation, to pass uncontradicted, to the complete degradation of their characters, and the utter destruction of their power, is morally impossible. History never did, and, while man is man, never can furnish such an example.

Is it then possible, that these writings are not true? Let us bring the matter home to our own times, and we shall immediately see that such a thing could not happen. Were any body of men to have their religion assailed, and themselves directly charged with

the foulest crimes, could we suppose that they would remain silent under the accusation, if they were able to repel it? The meanest sect in the country could not be treated in this manner unjustly, without contradiction. But it was the whole Jewish nation that had an interest in refuting the testimony of the apostles, if that could have been done with any degree of plausibility. That nation, which, for the sake of its independence and its religion, braved the Roman empire, and did not surrender till it was almost extinguished—that nation which for eighteen centuries has breathed the most inveterate hostility against Jesus the true Messiah, and is not distinguished for any thing so much as hatred to him and his cause, did not dare to contradict the writings of his disciples. All their ingenuity, malignity, and power, could not produce a refutation of the writings of the New Testament.

Nor were the characters of the Jewish rulers alone implicated in the public statements of the apostles; the conduct of Herod the king was also shown to have been in the highest degree disgraceful; while that of the Roman governor is proved to have been cowardly and degrading. Pilate is represented as having condemned Jesus Christ through fear of the Jews, after publicly declaring that he believed him to be innocent. Felix, the governor at Cæsarea, is also charged with having unjustly detained Paul as a prisoner, in order that he might receive money for his release. He is likewise represented as trembling when Paul reasoned with him of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. The iniquitous conduct of the magistrates of the city of Philippi, and afterwards

the submission they were compelled to make, when they learnt that Paul was a Roman citizen, is also detailed. Several particulars besides are stated, which occurred before some of the well known and principal men of the time; as Agrippa the king, Gallio the elder brother of Seneca the philosopher, and others whose names are mentioned in the history.

The credit of the Roman government was likewise deeply implicated. Where the rulers and statesmen were the ministers of religion, and the emperor *pontifex maximus*, and where no idea of the principle of religious toleration existed, we may judge of the light in which the chief men at Rome viewed the rise of the Christian religion,—a religion which brought a solemn and unequivocal charge against every other religion, as a system of falsehood and lies. That in its early progress it was neither unobserved nor neglected, is evident from the persecutions raised by the government, and the public edicts that were issued against it, as well as from the acrimonious language of Tacitus, in speaking of Christians. Nothing, we may be assured, would have been neglected, that could tend to overthrow or retard the progress of a system which exposed all the ritual of their worship (managed for the purpose of supporting the authority of government), as not only absurd and ridiculous, but impious and abominable in the sight of God. It is certain that every means must have been resorted to which capacity, diligence, or power, could suggest.

That there was no contradiction attempted by any of their numerous adversaries to the *facts* contained in the writings of the apostles, and everywhere asserted by the first Christians, establishes their truth beyond

all possibility of doubt. It can never be accounted for on any other principle than that their statements were not only true, but that they were so generally known to be so, that it would be vain to charge them with falsehood. Even the truth of the things recorded would not have screened them from the charge of forgery, had not the notoriety of their truth rendered it impossible to assail them in that quarter.

On the whole, then, we may judge of the strength of evidence that arises to the Christian religion, from there having *never been any contradictory statement from any quarter, opposed to the testimony of the apostles.*

CHAPTER XVII.

TESTIMONY TO THE FACTS OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY, FROM THE ADMISSIONS OF THOSE WHO PROFESSEDLY OPPOSED OR WROTE AGAINST CHRISTIANITY.

In the year 140, Trypho, a Jew, with four companions, all equally with himself violently opposed to the Christian religion, held a dialogue at Ephesus with Justin Martyr, which the latter committed to writing. In the course of this discussion, Justin often mentioned the facts contained in the Gospels, and appealed to particular miracles which Jesus Christ had wrought; yet Trypho and his companions, who joined in the dispute, *never denied these miracles, nor called in question any of the facts mentioned by the Evangelists.* All the objections which he raised against the

Gospels, were taken from the supposed absurdity of certain particulars affirmed in them. For example, he says, "it is foolish to suppose that Christ is God, and became man;" and he affirms it to be incredible that Jesus was born of a virgin. What his opinions on such things were, is of no consequence in the question before us. But we here find all that can be required in point of testimony. The facts which lie at the foundation of the Gospel, were admitted by Trypho; while, as a Jew, he had the best means of information as to what had taken place in his own country, on so important a subject, but a few years before his birth. As the Apostle John lived till about the year 101, Trypho must have been born either before, or soon after, John's death.

Justin having cited the prophecy, Dan. vii. 13, which describes the kingdom of the Son of Man, Trypho replied, "These, and suchlike Scriptures, constrained us to *expect* him great and illustrious, who, as the Son of Man, was to receive from the Ancient of Days the eternal kingdom; but he who is called your Christ was without reputation and glory, so that he fell under the greatest curse of the law of God, for he was crucified." In the following passage, Trypho bears a testimony to the character of Jesus: "In the fables of the Greeks, it is said that Perseus was born of Danae whilst a virgin, he who is called by them Jupiter, having fallen upon her in the form of gold. Now, ye who affirm the same thing ought to be ashamed, and should say rather that this Jesus was man of man. And if you could show from the Scriptures that he is the Christ, because he lived according to the law, and perfectly, you might say he was thought worthy to be chosen Christ, and

not dare to speak wonders, lest you be convicted of equal folly with the Greeks."

Justin affirmed that the Jews knew that Jesus arose from the dead, and ascended to heaven; and this was not contradicted by either Trypho or his companions. "The other nations," says Justin, "have not proceeded to such a degree of wickedness against Christ as you, who are even to them the authors of evil suspicions against that holy person, and against us his disciples. For after ye had crucified that only blameless and just person, by whose stripes healing has come to all who approach the Father through him; *when you knew that he was risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven*, as the prophets foretold should happen, you not only did not repent of the evil things you had committed, but, choosing chief men at Jerusalem, you sent them forth into all the earth to publish that the sect of the Christians were Atheists, spreading in their discourses those evil things concerning us, which all who are ignorant of us affirm; so that you are not only the cause of this iniquity among yourselves, but among all other men whatever."

The following view which TRYPHO takes of the prophecies of the Jewish Scriptures is worthy of notice, as coming from a Jew. Justin having shown, by many quotations from these Scriptures, that another besides the Father is called God, Trypho replied, "You have, my friend, strongly, and by many passages, demonstrated this: it remains that you show that this person, according to the will of his father, submitted to become man of a virgin, to be crucified, to die, to arise afterwards, and to return to heaven."

LUCIAN was a native of Samosata, in Syria; he was

born some time in the reign of Adrian, which began in the year 117, and terminated in 138. Although he did not expressly write in opposition to Christianity, he was strongly prejudiced against it. He gives the following account of Peregrinus, who publicly burnt himself in Greece soon after the Olympic games, about the year 165. Peregrinus, or Proteus, appears for a while to have imposed on the Christians, and to have joined himself to them. Lucian, after saying that "Peregrinus learned the wonderful doctrine of the Christians by conversing with their priests and scribes near Palestine," and after going on to observe, that they "still worship that great man who was crucified in Palestine, because he introduced into the world this new religion," he adds—"For this reason Proteus was taken up and put in prison, which very thing was of no small service to him afterwards, for giving reputation to his impostures, and gratifying his vanity. The Christians were much grieved for his imprisonment, and tried all ways to procure his liberty. Not being able to effect that, they did him all sorts of kind offices, and that not in a careless manner, but with the greatest assiduity; for even betimes in the morning, there would be at the prison old women, some widows, and also little orphan children; and some of the chief of their men, by corrupting the keepers, would get into prison, and stay the whole night there with him: there they had a good supper together, and their sacred discourses. And this excellent Peregrinus (for so he was still called) was thought by them to be an extraordinary person, no less than another Socrates. Even from the cities of Asia some Christians came to him, by order of the body, to relieve, encourage, and comfort him;

for it is incredible what expedition they use, when any of their friends are known to be in trouble. In a word, they spare nothing upon such an occasion; and Peregrinus's chain brought him in a good sum of money from them; for these miserable men have no doubt but they shall be immortal, and live for ever; therefore they contemn death, and many surrender themselves to sufferings. Moreover, their first Lawgiver has taught them, that they are all brethren when once they have turned, and renounced the gods of the Greeks, and worship that Master of theirs who was crucified, and engage to live according to his laws. They have also a sovereign contempt for all the things of this world, and look upon them as common, and trust one another with them without any particular security; for which reason, any subtle fellow, by good management, may impose upon this simple people, and grow rich among them." Lucian afterwards informs us, that Peregrinus was set at liberty by the governor of Syria, and that at length he separated from the Christians.

We have here an authentic testimony, from a heathen writer, who was well acquainted with mankind, to some of the main facts and principles of Christianity: That the Founder of the Christian religion was crucified in Palestine; that he was the great Master of the Christians, and the first promulgator of the principles which they received; that Christians had the hope of immortal life, and a contempt for this world and its enjoyments; that they courageously endured many afflictions on account of their principles, and sometimes surrendered themselves to sufferings; honesty and probity prevailed so much among them, that they trusted each other without security; their

Master had earnestly recommended to all his followers mutual love, by which also they were much distinguished; and their assiduity in relieving and comforting one another when under affliction, was matter of notoriety. It is no disparagement to them that they were imposed on by Peregrinus, who was admired by many others.

The principal heathen opponents who, during the four first centuries, wrote against the Christian religion, were, Celsus, Porphyry, Hierocles, and Julian. A great part of the works of these writers have come down to the present time in the answers that were made to them, in which their objections are stated minutely, by writers whose quotations from other works that are still extant are made with the greatest exactness. Of the genuineness of these extracts we have sufficient evidence. The dispute was of a public nature, and concerned all. It was carried on under the eye of friends and enemies, in writings published in the usual manner, to which every one had access. In such circumstances, if the Christian writers had either overlooked, mutilated, or mistated their opponents' arguments, it would only have exposed themselves, and discredited the cases they were supporting. But, as their answers are so minute, and as they affirm that their quotations are the exact words of the writings they opposed, at a time when these writings were all extant, and in every one's hands, we have full evidence of their faithfulness. The representation they give, too, of the arguments used, is abundantly credible, and, in general, they are such as are advanced at the present day. Had any others been brought forward, there can be no doubt, that, amidst such a multitude of writers of all descriptions, they would, in one way or another, have been transmitted or alluded to.

Celsus, contemporary with Lucian, was an Epicurean philosopher, who lived in the reign of Adrian. He was one of the most virulent adversaries of the Christian religion that ever lived, and was also a man of considerable parts and learning. The book which he wrote against the Christians, in the year 176, was entitled "The True Word." He here introduces a Jew declaiming against Jesus Christ, and against such Jews as were converted to Christianity. Origen's answer to Celsus is not a general reply, but a minute examination of all his objections, even those which appeared the most frivolous. He states the objections of his opponent in his own words; and, that nothing might escape him, he takes them, he says, in the order in which they were placed by Celsus.

Celsus used only the gospels themselves in search of evidence against their truth. He never refers to any spurious gospel, or to any other accounts of the life of Christ. His attack is conducted, *not by denying the facts* contained in the Scriptures, of which he all along *admits* the truth, but by reasoning from such as the following topics: That it was absurd to esteem and worship one as God, who was acknowledged to have been a man, and to have suffered death; that Jesus Christ invited sinners to enter into the kingdom of God; that it was inconsistent with his supposed dignity, to come to save such low and despicable creatures as the Jews and Christians; that he spake dishonourably and impiously of God; that the doctrines and precepts of religion are better taught by the Greek philosophers, than in the gospels, and without the threatenings of God. The following are specimens of the objections he brings forward.

"What need was there for carrying thee (Jesus), while an infant, into Egypt, that thou mightest not be slain, for it did not become God to be afraid of death?"—"How can we think him God, who, to omit other things, performed none of those matters which we are told he promised? And who, being condemned by us, when he was sought to be punished, was caught basely lurking and flying, being betrayed by those whom he called his disciples?"—"If you tell them (the Christians), that it is not the Son of God, but he who is Father of all, whom men ought to worship, they will not be satisfied, unless you also worship Him who is the author of their sedition; not that they exceed in the worship of God, but that they above measure worship this man." Speaking of the crucifixion, Celsus says, "If not before, why did he not now, at least, exert his divinity, and deliver himself from this ignominy, and treat those as they deserved, who behaved ignominiously both towards himself and his Father?"—"If these men worshipped no other but the one God, they might justly inveigh against all other Gods; but now they, out of measure, worship one who but lately appeared, and yet imagine they do not sin against God, though they also serve his minister." He affirms that Jesus, being "brought up obscurely, and obliged to serve for hire in Egypt, learned there certain powerful arts, for which the Egyptians are renowned; then returned greatly elated with his power, on account of which he declared himself a God."

Celsus represents Jesus Christ to have lived but a few years before the time when he wrote. He mentions its being said that Jesus was born of a virgin,

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and that angels appeared to Joseph. He speaks of the star that appeared at the birth of Jesus;—the wise men that came to worship him, when an infant, and Herod's massacring the children;—Joseph's fleeing with the child into Egypt, by the admonition of an angel;—the Holy Ghost descending on Jesus like a dove, when he was baptized by John, and the voice from heaven declaring him to be the Son of God;—his going about with his disciples, whom Celsus calls boatmen, publicans, and wicked sailors;—his healing the sick and lame, and raising the dead;—his foretelling his own sufferings and resurrection;—his being betrayed, and forsaken by his own disciples;—his sufferings;—his praying, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;"—the ignominious treatment he encountered;—the robe that was put upon him;—the crown of thorns;—the reed put into his hand;—his drinking vinegar and gall;—his being scourged and crucified;—his being seen after his resurrection by a fanatical woman (meaning Mary Magdalene), and by his own companions and disciples;—his showing them his hands that were pierced, the marks of his punishment. Celsus also mentions that angels were seen at his sepulchre, and that some said it was one angel, others that it was two; by which he hints at the seeming variation in the accounts given of it by the evangelists. Upon the whole, there are in Celsus about eighty quotations from the books of the New Testament, or references to them, of which Origen has taken notice. And whilst he argues from them, sometimes in a very perverse manner, he still takes for granted the truth of the *facts* they record as the *foundation* of his argument; and endeavours to show,

that what he esteems to be absurd in the words or actions of Jesus Christ, was a valid objection to Christianity.

The reasoning, then, on both sides of this dispute, proceeded on the *full admission of the truth of the Gospel history*. Celsus also grants that Jesus Christ wrought miracles. The difference between him and Origen, on this subject, lies in the manner of accounting for them; the former ascribing them to magic, the latter to the power of God.

Thus it appears, by the testimony of one of the earliest and most virulent opposers of Christianity, that the accounts concerning Jesus Christ were written by his own disciples in the age in which the facts related by them took place; and that in the next age there was no dispute concerning these facts, when, had they not stated what was truth, it would have been so easy to have convicted them of falsehood.

Porphyry the philosopher was born at Tyre, in Phenicia, about the year 233. He wrote a large treatise against the Christian religion, of which he was a very able and learned opponent. He endeavours, like Celsus, to overthrow the authority of the Scriptures, *not by denying their authenticity*, but by attempting to point out in them contradictions and absurdities; but he opposes no contradictory statement. He does not deny the miracles, but calls them "the works of cunning demons," and refers to some who, he asserts, performed miracles as great. He appears to have been well acquainted with the Scriptures, and refers to numerous passages and circumstances in them, which he perverts after the manner of Celsus, pointing out what he deems immoral and absurd. "If Christ," he ob-

jects, " be the way of salvation, the truth, and the life, and they only who believe in him can be saved, what became of the men who lived before his coming?"— " Christ threatens everlasting punishment to those who do not believe him, and yet in another place he says, with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again, which is absurd and contradictory; for all measure must be limited to time." He objects that Peter was reproved by Paul, for not proceeding uprightly in preaching the gospel. Hence he argues the falsehood of the whole doctrine, as a mere invention, since the heads of the churches disagreed. He argues in a similar manner from other passages of Scripture. The cause why Esculapius wrought no cures, as he says, in his time, and why the other gods no longer gave responses, or intermeddled in the affairs of men, he ascribes wholly to the honour that was given to Jesus: " Since Jesus has been honoured, none have received any public benefit from the gods."

Notwithstanding what he alleges against the Christians, Porphyry delivers an honourable testimony to the character of Jesus Christ. In his treatise, entitled, "Philosophy of Oracles," the following passage, preserved by Eusebius, occurs: " What we are going to say may perhaps appear to some a paradox, for the gods declared Christ to be a person most pious, and become immortal. Moreover they speak of him honourably." And he adds, " Apollo being asked concerning Christ, whether he is God, answered, ' That he who is renowned for wisdom, knows that the immortal soul continues after the body; but the pious soul of that man is most excelling:' He, therefore, affirmed him to be a most pious person, and that his

soul, which the foolish Christians worship, like that of other good men, was after death made immortal; but being asked why he was punished, he answered, 'That the body indeed is ever liable to little torments; but the soul of the pious rests in the plain of heaven.' He was, therefore," says Porphyry, "a pious person, and went to heaven, as pious persons do, for which cause you ought not to speak evil of him, but to pity the folly of the men," (namely, those who worship him.)

HIEROCLES the philosopher was prefect at Alexandria in the year 303. He composed two books, in order to confute the Christian religion. To these books Eusebius published an answer which still remains. Hierocles endeavours to prove the falsehood of the Scriptures, by attempting to show that they contradict themselves, for which purpose he makes observations on a great number of particular passages. The proof of Christianity, from the miracles of Jesus, he tries to invalidate, *not by denying the miracles themselves*, but by showing that one Apollonius had performed equal, if not greater miracles, which were recorded, he says, not by ignorant men like Peter and Paul, but by Maximus of Ægis, and Damas, a philosopher. "Now," he adds, "we reckon him who did such wonderful things, not a god, but only a man, whereas they (the Christians) give the appellation of God to Jesus, because he performed a few miracles." Lactantius, in remarking on this, affirms, that the difference between the miracles performed by Jesus, and all impostors whatever, is evident from the manner in which they were regarded by mankind.

JULIAN, the Roman emperor, succeeded to the throne

of the Cæsars in the year 361. He had once made a profession of Christianity, but afterwards abandoned it. In the year 363, he wrote a treatise in three books against the Christians, and to confute the Christian religion, against which he shows great inveteracy. Libanius the sophist, who was acquainted with Julian, says,—"He wrote a treatise to show that those books which make the Man of Palestine to be God, contained nothing but silly and ridiculous matters." Cyril wrote an answer to this work, in which he transcribes many passages from it at length. Julian, like the others whose works we have been considering, *acknowledges the truth of the facts* of the Gospel history. The nature of Julian's objections, as well as his admission of the facts related, will be seen from the following extracts: "Jesus having persuaded a few among you, and those of the worst of men, has now been celebrated about three hundred years, having done nothing in his lifetime worthy of remembrance, unless any one thinks it a mighty matter to heal lame and blind people, and exorcise demoniacs in the villages of Bethsaida and Bethany."—"Jesus whom you preach was one of Cæsar's subjects. If you refuse this, I will prove it by and by. But the thing is acknowledged; for you say, that he, with his father and mother, was enrolled under Cyrenius. Now, after he was born, what good did he do to his relations? for he says they would not obey him."

Alluding to the superstitious contentions of the Christians of that time about the observance of Easter, he says,—"These things flow entirely from yourselves, for nowhere has Jesus or Paul delivered you these things, commanding you to do them. The reason is,

they did not expect that ever you would attain to this degree of power; for they were content if they deceived servant-maids and slaves, and by their means some wives and husbands, such as Cornelius and Sergius; of whom, if the one is remembered among the noted men of that time, for these things happened in the reign of Tiberius or Claudius, do you think that I lie concerning the rest?"—"You are so unfortunate that you do not continue in those things which were delivered to you by the apostles. For their successors have dressed them up for the worst, and more impiously. For neither Paul, nor Matthew, nor Luke, nor Mark, ventured to call Jesus God. But that good man John, perceiving that numbers of the Grecian and Italian cities were caught with that distemper, and hearing, as I suppose, that the sepulchres of Peter and Paul were privately worshipped, was the first who had the boldness to pronounce it." Further, Julian objects to what John says. "'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him.' Whether, then, is this God Word made flesh, the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father? and if he is the same, as I think, then certainly even you have seen God; for he dwelt among you, and ye beheld his glory."

Speaking of the Christians, he scoffingly says,—"Not only that they of his time, but that some of those who at the beginning received the word from Paul, were such, is apparent from what Paul himself says, writing to them. For I presume he was not so void of shame as to send them such reproaches in his letter to them, if he had not known them to be just. These are the things which he writes of his disciples, and to them-

selves,—'Be not deceived; neither idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And you are not ignorant, brethren, that such were you also. But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified in the name of Jesus Christ.' 1 Cor. vi. 9—11. You see they were such, but they had been sanctified and washed, having been cleansed and scoured with water, which penetrates even to the soul. And baptism, which cannot heal the leprosy, nor the gout, nor the dysentry, nor any other distemper of the body, takes away adulteries, extortions, and all other sins of the soul." In the above passage, Julian says, "I presume he was not so void of shame as to send them such reproaches in his letter to them, if he had not known them to be just." This is the identical argument formerly insisted on respecting the testimony of the first Christians, to whom the epistles were addressed, which must have been applicable, otherwise they never would have procured their reception and acknowledgment.

In a letter to Arsacius, high priest of Galatia, referring to the impiety of the Heathens, Julian recommends the example of the Christians: "Why do we not look to that which has been the principal cause of the augmentation of impiety, humanity to strangers, care in burying the dead, and that sanctity of life of which they make such a show? all which things I will have to be really practised by our people. It is not sufficient that you are unblameable yourself, all the priests in Galatia ought to be so likewise. I will, therefore, that you persuade, and even compel, all the priests

in Galatia to live soberly, otherwise do you depose them from the priestly office, unless they, and their wives, and children, and servants, do religiously worship the gods, and also forbear to converse with the servants, children, and wives of the Galileans, who are impious towards the gods, and prefer impiety to religion. You are likewise to order them not to frequent the theatre, nor to drink in taverns, nor to exercise any mean or sordid employments. Such as hearken to your directions, you are to encourage; others you are to reject. You are also to erect hospitals in every city, that strangers also may share in our humanity; and not only those of our own religion—but others likewise, if they are necessitous." Julian then tells him what allowance he had made for that purpose. "For," says he, "it is a shame, when there are no beggars among the Jews, and the impious Galileans relieve not only their own people, but ours also, that our poor should be neglected by us, and be left helpless and destitute."

"After all," says Julian, "these (Galileans) have in some degree a proper sense of religion, for they worship no abject and vulgar deity, but that God who is truly all-powerful and all-good, by whose direction the sensible world is conducted; the same I am persuaded that we also worship, under different names. They, therefore, seem to me to act very consistently, as they are not transgressors of the laws, but only err in paying their worship to this one God, in neglect of all the rest, and in thinking that we only, whom they style the Gentiles, are precluded from his influence."

These last are honourable testimonies to the spirit and influence of Christianity, which Julian, when he had a different object in view, has furnished. On the

other hand, he is not able to produce any *fact* opposed to the Christian religion. His misinterpretations can easily be refuted.

If the authenticity of the Scriptures be admitted, as we find it was by all these early opposers, nothing more is wanted from them. Their testimony is therefore peculiarly valuable. They were the most learned and able of the early opponents of Christianity. Living near the period of its origin, they had every opportunity of examining and making use of all the evidence that could be alleged against it. Yet what have they produced? Compelled *to admit the facts and the miracles*, they admit all that is required. It has been observed, that especially the Emperor Julian with the command of the whole Roman empire, had every means and opportunity, as he had the greatest inclination, to detect forgeries in the Gospel histories had there been any, or to bring forward opposing testimonies if any such existed. But, at the same time, it is also clear, that with the whole world on their side, the first opponents of Christianity, as Trypho the Jew, and Celsus the Epicurean, had likewise all means in their power to obtain any opposite facts or statements. And, from the nature of the case, the enmity of all men, and the interest they felt in suppressing the new religion, had such ever existed, they could not have been lost. Being the most effectual weapons, as well as the easiest wielded, they would have been eagerly laid hold of, and assuredly preferred to such flimsy reasonings, and attempts to prove contradictions, as have been quoted.

The difference between the grounds of opposition to the Christian religion of the ancient and of the modern

infidels, is striking and important. They mutually destroy the authority of each other. The modern infidels deny the miracles, and would willingly cast a doubt on the facts, which, however, they dare not openly assert to be false. This implies an admission that the facts and miracles, if real, would prove the truth of Christianity. Were not this their impression, they would not attempt to deny what antiquity hands down with the fullest testimony, and what their own ancient brethren themselves fully admitted. Had they any other way to defend their cause, they would not betake themselves to a mode of defence so very unreasonable. This tacit admission, then, on the part of the moderns, condemns the ancients for admitting the facts, and denying the doctrines founded on them. *It is a deliberate testimony that the facts and miracles, if admitted, would prove the truth of Christianity.* On the other hand, the admission of the ancient infidels condemns the modern infidels, for it proves incontrovertibly that the facts and miracles are real. Had they not been so, the early opposers of the truth founded on them, could easily have detected their imposture. They must have admitted them, because they could not be reasonably denied. It is absurd, then, at this time, to question facts and miracles which were admitted to be true by those who were enemies to the religion established on their authority, and who had every means of ascertaining their truth or falsehood. But if these be true, modern infidels being judges, the Christian religion must be true, for they evidently see no other way consistently to deny its truth, than by denying the facts on which it is founded. Infidelity then destroys itself.

It was not want of evidence in ancient times more than now, that prevented men from becoming Christians: it was the natural opposition of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, and to which the things of God are foolishness.

The supreme divinity of Jesus Christ, who, as Julian says, the Christians "will have it, made the heaven and the earth," was, we see, a constant stumbling-block to thos e heathen opposers; and is a topic on which every one of them greatly insists. But in their opposition to it, we have incontestable evidence of the firm and uniform judgment of the first Christians on this point, which is the grand foundation and corner-stone of the whole revelation of God. "The Jews," says Paul, "require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

CHAPTER XVIII.

TESTIMONY TO FACTS RECORDED IN THE GOSPEL HISTORY, AND TO THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL, BY JEWISH AND HEATHEN HISTORIANS, AND BY THE PUBLIC EDICTS OF THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, was contemporary with the Apostles, having been born in the year 37.

From his situation and habits, he had the best means of becoming acquainted with all that took place at the rise of the Christian religion.

Respecting the founder of this religion, Josephus has thought fit to be silent in his history. The present copies of his work contain a passage which speaks very respectfully of Jesus Christ, and ascribes to him the character of the Messiah.* But as Josephus did not embrace Christianity, and as this passage is not quoted or referred to till the beginning of the fourth century, it is, for these and other reasons, generally accounted spurious. It is also according to the manner of Josephus, in other parts of his history, to pass over in silence what appeared unfavourable to the character of his nation. When he wrote, the Christian religion had made considerable progress, and to him every thing respecting it must have been well known. He had therefore no middle course. It was necessary either to enter somewhat particularly into the subject, or to pass it over entirely. To have mentioned it, as in the passage in question, would have been to condemn himself. His testimony, then, to Christianity is found in

* "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was (the) Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to be alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these, and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."—*Edin. Edit.* 1826, vol iii. 62.

his silence; and especially as he was a priest, is abundantly strong, affording a more decisive attestation to the truth of the Christian religion than the passage referred to, on the supposition of its being genuine. Not having embraced the Christian religion, and, at the same time, being unable to contradict or invalidate the facts on which it was founded, he maintains a prudent but significant silence. The minute description he has given of the other religious sects in Judea, fully proves that this important omission was one of design, to which he was compelled by circumstances.

His account, however, of the civil and religious affairs of Judea, of the Princes and Rulers who governed the nation, of the situation of places, of the customs of the country, and of the manners of the people, is perfectly accordant with the representations which we have in the Gospels. In addition to this, he has given a decided testimony to the appearance of John the Baptist, and also an account of his being put to death by Herod. The reason he assigns for his execution is different from that attributed by the sacred historian; but as to the fact there is an entire coincidence between them. His words are,—"Some of the Jews thought Herod's army was destroyed of God, he being justly punished for the slaughter of John, who was surnamed the Baptist. For Herod had put that good man to death, although he exhorted the Jews, after having exercised virtue and righteousness towards one another, and having performed the duties of piety towards God, to come to baptism. For thus baptism would be acceptable to him, not if they abstained from some sins only, but if, to purity of body, they joined a soul first cleansed by righteousness. But when many gathered round him,

for they were much pleased with the hearing of such discourses, Herod, fearing lest the people, who were greatly under the influence of his persuasion, might be carried to some insurrection, (for they seemed to do nothing but by his counsel), judged that it might be better to seize him before any insurrection was made, and to take him off, than, after affairs were disturbed, to repent of his negligence. Thus he, by the jealousy of Herod, being sent bound to Machærus, was there put to death; and the Jews thought, that, on account of the punishment of this person, destruction had befallen the army, God being displeased with Herod." In this pasage, Josephus, while he assigns such a reason for John's death as might be expected from a courtier, attests the important fact of his preaching and baptism, and the general attention which his ministry atracted, as well as his being put to death by Herod.

"UNDER the Roman government, it was customary for rulers of provinces to send to the Emperor an account of remarkable transactions in the places where they resided. Referring to this custom, Eusebius says —"Our Saviour's resurrection being much talked of throughout Palestine, Pilate informed the Emperor of it, as likewise of his miracles, which he had heard of, and that, being raised up after he had been put to death, he was already believed by many to be a God." These accounts were never made public, nor were any of a similar character likely to be published, as such accounts were intended only for the information of government. Augustus forbade the publication of the acts of the senate. But the above fact is attested by Justin Martyr in his first Apology, which, in the year 140, was presented to the Emperor Antoninus Pius

and the senate of Rome. Having mentioned the crucifixion of Jesus, and some of the circumstances of it, he adds—"And that these things were so done, you may know from the acts made in the time by Pontius Pilate." Tertullian, in his Apology, about the year 198, having spoken of our Saviour's crucifixion and resurrection, his appearances to his disciples, and his ascension to heaven in the sight of the same disciples, who were ordained by him to preach the Gospel over the world, says, "Of all these things relating to Christ, Pilate, in his conscience a Christian, sent an account to Tiberius, then Emperor." In another part of the same Apology he adds, "There was an ancient decree, that no one should be received for a deity unless he was first approved of by the senate. Tiberius, in whose time the Christian religion had its rise, having received from Palestine in Syria an account of such things as manifested our Saviour's divinity, proposed to the senate, and giving his own vote as first in his favour, that he should be placed among the gods. The senate refused, because he had himself declined that honour. Nevertheless, the Emperor persisted in his own opinion, and ordered, that if any accused the Christians they should be punished."

These testimonies are taken from public Apologies for the Christian religion, presented, or proposed and recommended, to the Emperor and senate of Rome, or to magistrates of public authority and great distinction in the Roman empire.

Tacitus, the Roman historian, was born in the year 61 or 62. He was Prætor of Rome under Domitian in 88, and Consul in the short reign of Nerva in 97. In his account of the great fire at Rome in the 10th of

Nero, about thirty years after our Lord's ascension, he says—"To suppress, therefore, this common rumour," (viz., that the Emperor himself had set fire to the city), "Nero procured others to be accused, and inflicted exquisite punishments upon those people who were abhorred for their crimes, and were commonly known by the name of Christians. They had their denomination from Christus, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death as a criminal by the procurator Pontius Pilate. This pernicious superstition, though checked for a while, broke out again, and spread not only over Judea, the source of this evil, but reached the city also, whither flow from all quarters all things vile and shameful, and where they find shelter and encouragement. At first, they only were apprehended who confessed themselves of that sect; afterwards a vast multitude, discovered by them: all of whom were condemned, not so much for the crime of burning the city, as for their enmity to mankind. Their executions were so contrived as to expose them to derision and contempt. Some were covered over with the skins of wild beasts, and torn to pieces by dogs; some were crucified; others, having been daubed over with combustible materials, were set up as lights in the night time, and thus burnt to death. Nero made use of his own gardens as a theatre upon this occasion, and also exhibited the diversions of the circus, sometimes standing in the crowd as a spectator, in the habit of a charioteer; at other times driving a chariot himself, till at length these men, though really criminal, and deserving exemplary punishment, began to be commiserated as people who were destroyed, not out of a regard to the public welfare, but only to gratify the cruelty of one man."

Such is the testimony of Tacitus, who lived in the same age with the apostles, to the principal facts which relate to the origin of the Gospel, as well as to its rapid progress. He here attests that Jesus Christ was put to death as a malefactor, by Pontius Pilate, procurator under Tiberius; that, from Christ, the people called Christians took their name; that this religion had its rise in Judea; that thence it was propagated into other parts of the world, as far as Rome, where Christians were very numerous; and that they were reproached and hated, and underwent many and grievous sufferings.

Suetonius, another eminent Roman historian, was born about the year 70. In his History of the Life of Claudius, who reigned from the year 41 to 54, he says that the Emperor banished the Jews from Rome, who were continually making disturbances, Christus being their leader. The first Christians being of the Jewish nation, were for a while confounded with the rest of that people, and shared in the hardships that were imposed on them. This account, however, attests what is related in the Acts of the Apostles, (xviii. 2), that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome, when Aquila and Priscilla, two Jewish Christians, were compelled to leave that city. In the life of Nero, whose reign began in 54, and ended in 68, Suetonius says, "The Christians were punished; a sort of men of a new and malignant superstition." In this persecution Paul is said to have been beheaded.

On the foregoing passage of Tacitus, and in reference to the persecution of the Christians under Nero, Gibbon remarks, "*The most sceptical criticism is obliged to respect the truth of this extraordinary fact, and*

the integrity of this celebrated passage of Tacitus. The former is confirmed by the diligent and accurate Suetonius, who mentions the punishment which Nero inflicted on the Christians." Such is the ample admission which this inveterate opposer of the truth of Christianity is here compelled to make.

The reign of the Emperor DOMITIAN, under whom the second persecution of the Christians took place, began in the year 81, and terminated in the year 96. Domitian made enquiry after the posterity of David, and two men were brought before him of that family. "At that time," says Hegesippus, "there were yet remaining of the kindred of Christ the grandsons of Jude, who was called his brother according to the flesh. These some accused as being of the race of David, and Evocatus brought them before Domitianus Cæsar; for he too was afraid of the coming of the Christ, as well as Herod." Of these men, Mr Gibbon says, "They frankly confessed their royal origin, and their near relation to the Messiah; but they disclaimed any temporal views, and professed that his kingdom, which they devoutly expected, was purely of a spiritual and angelic nature. When they were examined concerning their origin and occupation, they showed their hands, hardened with daily labour, and declared that they derived their whole subsistence from the cultivation of a farm near Cocaba, of the extent of about 24 English acres, and of the value of three hundred pounds sterling. The grandsons of St Jude were dismissed with compassion and contempt."

During the third persecution, which began in the year 100, in the third year of the Emperor TRAJAN, the younger Pliny was appointed proconsul of Bithynia,

a province of the Roman empire, on the Euxine Sea. In that distant country there were now vast numbers of Christians, against whom the proconsul, according to the Emperor's edict, used great severity. Being desirous of more full information how to proceed against them, and "being moved," as Eusebius says, "at the multitude of those who were slain for the faith," he wrote the following letter to Trajan, in the year 107, which was formerly noticed, and in the same year received the Emperor's rescript.

"Pliny, to the Emperor Trajan, health and happiness. It is my constant custom, sir, to refer myself to you, in all matters concerning which I have any doubt. For who can better direct me where I hesitate, or instruct me where I am ignorant? I have never been present at any trials of Christians; so that I know not well what is the subject-matter of punishment or of enquiry, or what strictness ought to be used in either. Nor have I been a little perplexed to determine whether any difference ought to be made upon account of age, or whether the young and tender, and the full-grown and robust, ought to be treated all alike; whether repentance should entitle to pardon, or whether all who have once been Christians ought to be punished, though they are no longer so; whether the name itself, although no crimes be detected, or crimes only belonging to the name, ought to be punished. Concerning all these things I am in doubt. In the mean time, I have taken this course with all who have been brought before me, and have been accused as Christians. I have put the question to them, Whether they were Christians? Upon their confessing to me that they were, I repeated the question a second and a third time,

threatening also to punish them with death. Such as still persisted, I ordered away to be punished; for it was no doubt with me, whatever might be the nature of their opinion, that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished. There were others of the same infatuation, whom, because they are Roman citizens, I have noted down to be sent to the city. In a short time, the crime spreading itself, even whilst under persecution, as is usual in such cases, divers sorts of people came in my way. An information was presented to me, without mentioning the author, containing the names of many persons, who, upon examination, denied that they were Christians, or had ever been so; who repeated after me an invocation of the gods, and with wine and frankincense made supplication to your image, which, for that purpose, I had caused to be brought and set before them, together with the statues of the deities. Moreover, they reviled the name of Christ, none of which things, as is said, they who are really Christians can by any means be compelled to do. These, therefore, I thought proper to discharge. Others were named by an informer, who at first confessed themselves Christians, and afterwards denied it; the rest said they had been Christians, but had left them some three years ago, some longer, and one or more above twenty years. They all worshipped your image, and the statues of the gods; these also reviled Christ. They affirmed that the whole of their fault or error lay in this, that they were wont to meet together, on a stated day, before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as God; and bind themselves by an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery, never to falsify

their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them, when called upon to return it. When these things were performed, it was their custom to separate, and then to come together again to a meal, which they ate in common, without any disorder; but this they had forborne since the publication of my edict, by which, according to your commands, I prohibited assemblies. After receiving this account, I judged it the more necessary to examine, and that by torture, two maid-servants, which were called ministers. But I have discovered nothing beside a bad and excessive superstition. Suspending therefore all judicial proceedings, I have recourse to you for advice; for it has appeared unto me a matter highly deserving consideration, especially upon account of the great number of persons who are in danger of suffering; for many of all ages, and every rank, of both sexes likewise, are accused, and will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country. Nevertheless it seems to me that it may be restrained and corrected. It is certain that the temples, which were almost forsaken, begin to be more frequented. And the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are revived. Victims likewise are everywhere bought up, whereas for some time there were few purchasers. Whence it is easy to imagine what numbers of men might be reclaimed, if pardon were granted to those who shall repent." To the above letter, the Emperor Trajan sent the following answer:

"Trajan to Pliny, health and happiness. You have taken the right method, my Pliny, in your proceedings with those who have been brought before you as Christians; for it is impossible to establish any one rule that

shall hold universally. They are not to be sought for. If any are brought before you, and are convicted, they ought to be punished. However, he that denies his being a Christian, and makes it evident in fact; that is, by supplicating our gods; though he be suspected to have been so formerly, let him be pardoned upon repentance. But in no case, of any crime whatever, may a bill of information be received, without being signed by him who presents it; for that would be a dangerous precedent, and unworthy of my government."

In the above letters, we have a public and authentic attestation to the amazing growth of the Christian religion, which had made such progress in the remote country of Bithynia, that the Pagan temples were, according to Pliny, "almost forsaken;" he also mentions that there had been Christians in that country twenty years before. Their blameless lives, the purity of their religious worship, their meeting together on a certain day, their adoration of Jesus Christ as God, their obedience to their civil rulers, in giving up what they did not consider to be enjoined by Divine authority, and their fortitude in suffering, and steady perseverance in the faith of Christ, are all unequivocally attested by their persecutors.

The Emperor ADRIAN was born in the year 76. He reigned twenty years from the death of Trajan, in 117. Trajan's edict being still in force against the Christians, they suffered persecution under Adrian's reign, although he published no new edict against them. Upon occasion, however, of the Apologies which Quadratus and Aristides presented to him at Athens, in the year 126, that persecution was moderated. Of Aristides, Jerome says,—"He was a most

eloquent Athenian philosopher, and in his former habit he presented to the Emperor Adrian, at the same time with Quadratus, a book containing an account of our sect, that is, an Apology for the Christians, which is still extant, a monument with the learned of his ingenuity." This Apology is now lost. To Quadratus was ascribed the gift of prophecy, and he is said to have been "a disciple of the apostles." The following is all that remains of the Apology which he presented to Adrian:—"The works of our Saviour were always conspicuous, for they were real, both they that were healed and they that were raised from the dead; who were seen not only when they were healed or raised, but for a long time afterwards; nor only whilst he dwelt on this earth, but also after his departure, and for a good while after it, insomuch that some of them have reached to our times."

We are informed by Eusebius, that "Serenius Granianus, proconsul, wrote to the Emperor Adrian, that it seemed to him unjust that the Christians should be put to death, only to gratify the clamours of the people, without trial." The Apologies of Aristides and Quadratus, presented about the same time with the above letter, appear to have contributed to procure the following favourable rescript from the Emperor Adrian. "Adrian to Minucius Fundanus: I have received a letter written to me by the illustrious Serenius Granianus, whom you have succeeded. It seems then to me, that this is an affair which ought not to be passed over without being examined into, if it were only to prevent disturbance being given to people, and that room may not be left for informers to practise their wicked arts. If, therefore, the people

of the province will appear publicly, and in a legal way charge the Christians, that they may answer for themselves in court, let them take that course, and not proceed by importunate demands and loud clamours only. For it is much the best method, if any bring accusations, that you should take cognizance of them. If, then, any one shall accuse and make out any thing contrary to the laws, do you determine according to the nature of the crime; but, by Hercules, if the charge be only a calumny, do you take care to punish the author of it with the severity it deserves."

In the above rescript, Trajan's edict is not repealed; according to which, if a man was accused and proved to be a Christian, a proconsul is required to punish him, unless he recant. But this rescript was, in a considerable degree, favourable to the Christians; and the persecution, which before had been violent, was now restrained and moderated.

Besides the rescript, there is a letter of Adrian to Servianus (husband of Paulina, the Emperor's sister), who was consul in the year 134. "Adrian Augustus, to the consul Servianus, wisheth health. I have found Egypt, my dear Servianus, which you commended to me, all over fickle and inconstant, and continually shaken by the slightest reports of fame. The worshippers of Serapis are Christians, and they are devoted to Serapis, who call themselves Christ's bishops. There is no ruler of the Jewish synagogue, no Samaritan, no presbyter of the Christians, no mathematician, no soothsayer, no anointer, even the patriarch, if he should come to Egypt, would be required by some to worship Serapis, by others Christ. A

seditious and turbulent sort of men. However, the city is rich and populous. Nor are any idle; some are employed in making glass, others paper, others in weaving linen. They have one God; him the Christians, him the Jews, him all the Gentile people worship."

It is not surprising that in the above letter the Christians in Egypt, as to their worship, and in different respects, are confounded with the other Egyptians. But the inaccuracy of the representation in these things does not invalidate the general fact, which the Emperor here authenticates, that the Christians, within a century after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, were very numerous throughout Egypt.

ANTONINUS, surnamed the Pious, succeeded Adrian in the year 138. To this Emperor, Justin Martyr presented at Rome his first Apology in the year 140. It is inscribed in this manner:—"To the Emperor Titus Ælius Adrianus Antoninus the Pious, and to his son Verissimus and Lucius, and the Senate, and all the people of the Romans, in behalf of men gathered out of all nations, who are unjustly hated and ill-treated, I, Justin, son of Priscus, son of Bacchius, one of them of the city of Flavia Neapolis, in that part of Syria which is called Palestine, making this address and supplication." The following are the concluding words of this Apology:—"On the day called Sunday we all meet together; on which day Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead; on the day before Saturday he was crucified; and on the day after Saturday, which is Sunday, he appeared to his apostles and disciples, and taught them those things which we have set before you, and refer to your consideration. If these things

appear agreeable to reason and truth, pay a regard to them; if they appear trifling, reject them as such; but do not treat as enemies, nor appoint capital punishment to those who have done no harm; for we foretell unto you that you will not escape the future judgment of God if you persist in unrighteousness; and we shall say, the will of the Lord be done."

The copy of an edict said to be presented to the states in Asia, in consequence of the above and other representations from Christians, is still extant. It contains a strong testimony in favour of the Christians; but as its genuineness is doubted by some, it is here omitted, as well as every thing among these early testimonies, respecting the genuineness of which there is the smallest uncertainty.

Marcus Antoninus, the philosopher, succeeded Antoninus Pius as Emperor, in the year 161. There is still extant a book written by him called his "Meditations." In the eleventh book, the following passage occurs, in which he mentions the Christians. "What a soul is that which is prepared, even now presently, if needful, to be separated from the body, whether it be to be extinguished, or to be dispersed, or to subsist still! But this readiness must proceed from a well-weighed judgment, not from mere obstinacy like the Christians. And it should be done considerately, and with gravity, without tragical exclamations, and so as to persuade another."

The foregoing passage contains an attestation to the fortitude of the Christians who lived in the age next to the apostles, grounded on the assured conviction of the truth of that religion for which they suffered so much. The emperor was a bigot in religion and in

philosophy; and nothing but his inveterate prejudice against Christianity can account for his condemning that fortitude which he ought to have approved. He ascribes the willingness of the Christians to die, to obstinacy, and says, that "a man ought to resign life only upon a well-formed judgment, and considerately." But did not the Christians die in this manner? He says, "It should be done with gravity, without tragical exclamations;" upon which it has been observed, that "it is not a little strange that a Stoic, whose writings are full of affectation, and are all over tragical, should blame the Christians for not dying without tragical noise and exclamation. If they then called upon God and Christ; if they then exhorted their brethren to constancy and perseverance; if they expressed a contempt of this world, and its fading enjoyments; if they speak in sublime strains of the felicities of the world to come; in a word, if they triumphed in death, as some of them did, there is nothing in it absurd or unreasonable, nothing but what is truly admirable." It will be recollected, that the great persecution against the churches at Lyons and Vienne, in France, some account of which was formerly given, took place under this emperor, who therefore ought not to have spoken in this manner of the sufferings of the Christians.

The expressions of Marcus Antoninus denote great uncertainty concerning a future state of existence. He is doubtful whether the soul, when separated from the body, shall be "extinguished or dispersed, or shall still subsist." He says again, "To what purpose all this? ..... You have made your voyage, and arrived at your port. Go ashore; if into another life, the gods are there; if into a state of insensibility, you will be

no longer distracted by pains and pleasures, nor be in subjection to this mean vessel."

Such was the amount of the speculations of heathen philosophers respecting a future state; yet, with but few exceptions, they went hand in hand in violently opposing that Gospel, which, presenting to all who examine it, the most indubitable evidence of its divine original, has brought life and immortality to light.

To trace this chain of evidence any further, would be superfluous. Nothing can be more fully authenticated than what has been brought forward on this head; all of which so forcibly illustrates the truth of the declaration of Paul before King Agrippa,—"*This thing was not done in a corner.*"

CHAPTER XIX.

FACTS RECORDED IN THE EARLIER PARTS OF THE SCRIPTURE HISTORY, CANNOT BE DISPROVED, AND ARE CORROBORATED BY TRADITION.

A MULTITUDE of public facts, from the creation of the world down to a late period of its history, are detailed in the Bible. This circumstance alone challenges every species of attack; but when to this is added an uncompromising claim to infallibility, it is obvious, that the divine authority of the Scriptures is in this manner pledged, and rested upon the invulnerable character of its records. Assaults from various quarters have accordingly been made, but not in one instance with the smallest success. It is one of the most fearful proofs of the desperate wickedness of fallen

man, and of his natural enmity against God, that the first use he makes of his knowledge is to attempt to dethrone his Maker. If any novelty in the discoveries of science, the researches of history, or the observations of material objects, seems at first sight to be inconsistent with any of the dictates of Revelation, instead of waiting to examine more fully the facts which are but partially disclosed, he is ever ready either to avow his suspicion, or boldly to pronounce his opinion that after all the Scriptures may be untrue. The Bible has, however, resisted every assault from whatever quarter it has come, and, like the rock which arises in the midst of the ocean, has survived every adverse shock. After an interval of nearly three thousand years, the people of God may still joyfully repeat to each other the triumphant exhortation of the Psalmist, "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces.—As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God; God will establish it for ever."

The three following topics are frequently urged against the veracity of the books of Moses:—The age of the world;—the varieties of the human species;—the original circumstances of mankind.

To prove that the world was formed at a much earlier period than Moses assigns for its creation, the bowels of the earth have been ransacked, and all the aids that can be derived from modern discoveries resorted to, but in vain. One theory has been exploded after another, and no progress whatever has been made towards the detection of any mistake, on this point, in the sacred writers.

In the preface to "An Essay on the Theory of the Earth," dated 1815, by M. Cuvier of Paris, who is styled one of the first philosophers of the age, the publisher says, "Although the Mosaic account of the creation of the world is an inspired writing, and consequently rests on evidence totally independent of human observation and experience, still it is interesting, and in many respects important, to know that it coincides with the various phenomena observable in the mineral kingdom. The structure of the earth, and the mode of distribution of extraneous fossils or petrifactions, are so many direct evidences of the truth of the Scripture account of the formation of the earth; and they might be used as proofs of its author having been inspired, because the mineralogical facts discovered by modern naturalists were unknown to the sacred historian. . . . The deluge, one of the grandest natural events described in the Bible, is equally confirmed, with regard to its extent and the period of its occurrence, by a careful study of the various phenomena observed on and near the earth's surface. The age of the human race, also, a most important enquiry, is satisfactorily determined by an appeal to natu ral appearances; and the pretended great antiquity of some nations, so much insisted on by certain philosophers, is thereby shown to be entirely unfounded."

On the other hand, how little progress has yet been made towards bringing any *proof* against the authenticity of the writings of Moses, from the various theories of the earth that have been produced, may be learned from the following declaration of M. Cuvier himself:— "The present period, with respect to the theory of the earth, bears some resemblance to that in which some philosophers thought that the heavens were formed of

polished stone, and that the moon was no larger than the Peloponnesus." He afterwards adds, "When I formerly mentioned this circumstance of the science of geology having become ridiculous, I only expressed a well-known truth."* From this representation, we may learn how to estimate the opinions of those who, from their partial observations and fanciful theories, have concluded, that "as the world has no appearance of having had a beginning, so there is no probability that it will have an end."

The following is an extract respecting the age of the world, from Bishop Watson's Letters to Mr Gibbon, addressed, he says, "to a set of men who have picked up in their travels, or the writings of the Deists, a few flimsy objections against Christianity."—"I cannot help taking notice of an argument by which some philosophers have of late endeavoured to overturn the whole system of revelation; and it is the more necessary to give an answer to their objection, as it is become a common subject of philosophical conversation, especially amongst those who have visited the continent. The objection tends to invalidate, as is supposed, the authority of Moses, by showing that the earth is much older than it can be proved to be from his account of the creation, and the Scripture chronology. We contend, that six thousand years have not yet elapsed since the creation. And these philosophers contend, that they have indubitable proof of the earth's being at the least fourteen thousand years old; and they complain that Moses hangs as a dead weight upon them, and blunts all their zeal for enquiry.

* This remark may be applied to M. Cuvier himself, whenever he wanders into the fields of speculation.

"The Canonico Recupero, who, it seems, is engaged in writing the history of Mount Etna, has discovered a stratum of lava which flowed from that mountain, according to his opinion, in the time of the second Punic war, or about two thousand years ago; this stratum is not yet covered with soil sufficient for the production of either corn or vines; it requires, then, says the Canon, two thousand years, at least, to convert a stratum of lava into a fertile field. In sinking a pit near *Jaci*, in the neighbourhood of Etna, they have discovered evident marks of seven distinct lavas, one under the other, the surfaces of which are parallel, and most of them covered with a thick bed of rich earth. Now, the eruption which formed the lowest of these lavas (if we may be allowed to reason, says the Canon, from analogy), flowed from the mountain at least fourteen thousand years ago." To this it is replied:—"In the first place, the Canon has not satisfactorily established his main fact, that the lava in question is the identical lava which Diodorus Siculus mentions to have flowed from Etna in the second Carthaginian war; and in the second place, it may be observed, that the time necessary for converting lavas into fertile fields must be very different, according the different consistencies of the lavas, and their different situations, with respect to elevation or depression, to their being exposed to winds, rains, and to other circumstances; just as the time in which the heaps of iron slag (which resembles lava) are covered with verdure, is different at different furnaces, according to the nature of the slag, and situation of the furnace; and something of this kind is deducible from the account of the Canon himself, since the crevices of this famous stratum are really

full of rich good soil, and have pretty large trees growing in them.

" But if all this should be thought not sufficient to remove the objection, I will produce the Canon an analogy in opposition to his analogy, and which is grounded on more certain facts. Etna and Vesuvius resemble each other in the causes which produce their eruptions, and in the nature of their lavas, and in the time necessary to mellow them into soil fit for vegetation; or if there be any slight difference in this respect, it is probably not greater than what subsists between different lavas of the same mountain. This being admitted, which no philosopher will deny, the Canon's analogy will prove just nothing at all, if we can produce an instance of seven different lavas (with interjacent strata of vegetable earth), which have flowed from Mount Vesuvius within the space, not of fourteen thousand, but of somewhat less than seventeen hundred years; for then, according to our analogy, a stratum of lava may be covered with vegetable soil in about two hundred and fifty years, instead of requiring two thousand for the purpose. The eruption of Vesuvius, which destroyed Herculaneum and Pompeii, is rendered still more famous by the death of Pliny, recorded by his nephew in his letter to Tacitus; this event happened in the year 79; it is not yet, then, quite seventeen hundred years since Herculaneum was swallowed up: but we are informed, by unquestionable authority, that ' the matter which covers the ancient town of Herculaneum is not the produce of one eruption only; for there are evident marks, that the matter of six eruptions has taken its course over that which lies immediately above the town, and was the cause of its destruction.

These strata are either of lava or burnt matter, *with veins of good soil betwixt them.*' I will not add another word on this subject, except that the bishop of the diocese was not much out in his advice to Canonico Recupero, to take care not to make his mountain older than Moses; though it would have been full as well to have shut his mouth with a reason, as to have stopped it with the dread of an ecclesiastical censure."

It is sufficient here to remark, that no fact has been discovered which can subvert one jot or tittle of the words of Moses. It is not the facts of geologists that need to be controverted, it is their rash and presumptuous inferences. If it be asserted that more time must have been necessary to form one series of rocks than another, or to account for certain appearances in other respects, it is answered, this is a theory not a fact. The doctrine of geologists is not the interpretation of facts, but only inferences which are by no means necessary. Could not he who created the world out of nothing—a fact which cannot be denied, otherwise how could the world have existed at all—cause all things to assume at the moment of creation, appearances which geologists impute to the lapse of ages? We are taught by Scripture that both man and the lower animals were formed out of the dust of the earth without undergoing any preparatory process, as we are also told that trees and herbs "before they grew," with their fruits and seeds sprung into existence at the word of Jehovah. Why then shall it be deemed incredible that other parts of the world should have been formed at once as they now exist? The contrary of this cannot be proved. Can any thing be too hard for God? Can it be supposed that it could present any difficulty to Him, to whom a

thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years, to give any form he chose to its several parts in the shortest period, or by any process that he was pleased to make it undergo, which, whether by fire or by water, or by any other means, as when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, must still have been all from himself?

The first and second verses of the book of Genesis declare the creation of the world, and that it was without form and void, involved in darkness. Next to this, in the third and following verses, without any break, and in a continuous narrative, the order to which, in six days, it was reduced is plainly related, fitting it for man and the animals by which it was to be inhabited, while in the state of chaos, and before what was done in these six days, it is evident that there was neither light, nor food, nor place, for either animal or vegetable existence. We have here a succinct but clear history of the creation of the world, both of its being begun and finished. "In the beginning," it is said, "God created the heaven and the earth," and after the account of the six days' work it is added, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." It is scarcely possible to imagine a record less calculated to suggest or countenance the possibility of any longer space than six days between the two periods thus distinctly marked as the *beginning* and the *finishing*. The same fact was afterwards proclaimed by the voice of God himself in giving out the fourth commandment; "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is." Here *making* is applied to the whole work.

Theopinion that each day in the account of crea-

tion was a year, or any longer period than is denoted by the word day, in its usual signification, outrages all the laws of language. Were such a license allowed by Scripture it would not be a revelation at all; but would need a revelation to explain it. In a figurative and prophetic sense, a day is sometimes used in Scripture to denote a year; but of this express intimation is given, while it affords no countenance to the imagination that, in the plainest historical narratives, it is used in any other sense than that in which it is elsewhere employed throughout the Bible. In the first chapter of Genesis the limits of a day are fixed within the bounds of evening and morning; and when God gave to man a reason for keeping holy the Sabbath-day, he expressly founded it on the fact that in six days he made heaven and earth, and rested the seventh day. If the seventh day includes only twenty four hours, can the other six days referred to in the same sentence, signify any other period of time?

In the place that has been given by some Christians to the *theories* and *inferences* of geologists, which contradict the clear and explicit declarations of the word of God, respecting the creation, we see the dangerous consequences of not holding the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, and of adopting *theories* on that subject also. When the verbal inspiration of every part of the Scriptures which they claim for themselves is departed from, and vain distinctions respecting it adopted, when instead of believing *that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,* the Bible is received as the production of men who were sometimes directed in one way, sometimes in another, and sometimes not directed at all; but who wrote "as any other plain

and faithful men might do,"—then, indeed, it may easily be admitted that Moses is in error. And if Moses, on the one hand, asserts that the world was created at a period about six thousand years ago, in the course of six days, and geologists, on the other hand, tell us that it must have existed thousands and thousands of years prior to that period, we may be satisfied that Moses is mistaken, and that their's is the true account.*

In the same way when Moses affirms, in a manner so minute and particular, Gen. vii. 19. 23, that the flood covered the whole earth, and that every living creature that moved upon it died; we ought to give no credit to his assertion, since philosophers assure us that water enough for such an universal catastrophe could not have been found; and that such an account is fraught with "overwhelming difficulties." His narrative likewise of the opening of the passage for the Israelites through the red sea, and of the waters being "a wall unto them on their right hand and their left," presents such *overwhelming difficulties* as render it utterly incredible. Shall men thus impiously take upon themselves to limit the Holy One of Israel? If God created the universe, shall it be impossible or difficult for him, when he declares, "Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to de-

* When sentiments that so unreservedly contradict the plainest statements of the Word of God are publicly taught, it is of the greatest importance to every Christian to examine the question of the inspiration of the Scriptures. The reader will find this subject fully discussed in Mr Carson's unanswered work, entitled, "Dr Pye Smith's Theory of Inspiration, proved to be erroneous," published in 1830. Sold by Hamilton, Adams, & Co.

stroy all flesh,"—shall it be to him impossible to produce a sufficient quantity of water to effect this purpose? Are men "willingly ignorant, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water, whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." Then to go the full length of denying every miracle recorded in the Bible is only to be consistent; and at the same time to deny the omnipotence of God.

One thing respecting the great age of the world assigned to it by geologists, is of itself sufficient to deter Christians from giving way to their *theories* on this subject, although it will not of course occasion any difficulty to others. From the remains of those animals which, it is asserted, existed on the earth long before the formation of man, it is evident that they were subject to death. Yet we are informed in the Bible, that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and in every part of the Sacred volume, death is represented to be *the wages of sin.* If, then, death be the consequence of sin, how could it reign before sin entered? But that impious system which sets aside the plain declarations of Scripture respecting the age of the world, the catastrophe of the flood and the account of the manner in which the earth was afterwards repeopled, presents a state of things entirely unconformable to that which we are taught in the word of God.

The ill success which attended the Deistical speculations of the writers of the last century might have taught a lesson of humility to the geologists of the present generation. The Bible has nothing to fear from the progress of knowledge; but sinful man has

much to dread from the snares laid for him by the craft of Satan, and from the unbelief of his own heart.

It is ascertained by astronomical calculations, that at the time determined in Scripture for the creation, the relative position of the sun to the earth was, as might be anticipated, the most favourable possible for imparting light and heat to the world. From that position, the sun, during a very long period, gradually departed, but it is now returning to it again. This is a very remarkable confirmation of the date assigned by Moses for the creation of the world.*

In order to invalidate the truth of revelation, it has been earnestly contended that the human race is not

* "By comparing very distant observations, it is found that the line of the *apsides*, or the longer axis of the sun's orbit, has a progressive motion, or a motion eastward: so that the apsis recedes from the vernal equinox 62″, or by De Lambre's tables, 61″.9 annually.

"The line of the apsides thus continually moving round, must at one period have coincided with the line of the equinoxes. The lower apsis or perigee in 1750, was 278° 6211 from the vernal equinox, according to La Caille; and the higher apsis was therefore at the distance of 98°.6211. The time required to move over this arch, at the rate of 62″ annually, is about 5722 years, which goes back nearly 4000 before our era,—*period remarkable for being that to which chronologists refer the creation of the world.* At that period, the length of time during which the sun was in the northern signs, that is, on the north side of the equator, *was precisely the same* with that on which he was on the south, *each being exactly half a year.* At present, the apogee, where the sun's motion is slowest, being in the ninth degree of Cancer, more time by 7^{d} 16^{h} 30^{m} 8^{s} is consumed in the northern than the southern signs; so great is the change which the motion of the apsides has produced. About 464 years ago, the apogee was in the beginning of Cancer."—*Playfair's Outlines of Natural Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 11.—1019.

descended from one pair. If this could be proved, it would contradict the Mosaic account of the creation of man, and of the peopling of the earth, as well as of the declaration of the apostle, that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men. It also strikes at the root of the whole account of the entrance of sin and death through the first progenitor of mankind, and would equally invalidate the universality of the commission of the apostles to proclaim the way of recovery to all nations through the righteousness of the second Adam. This attempt, however, like the other respecting the age of the world, has proved abortive. Nothing that has been observed or advanced on the subject, is at all calculated to establish such an opinion.

The arguments used against the unity of the human race have all been shown to be unfounded, and many of them ridiculous. The first and chief cause of its variety is proved, by an appeal to facts in every part of the world, to be *climate;* by which is meant, not so much the latitude of a country from the equator, as the degree of heat or cold, that depends on many connected circumstances. The next cause is to be found in the state of society, which greatly augments or corrects the influence of climate, and is itself the independent cause of many conspicuous distinctions among mankind. These causes, it has been shown, may be infinitely varied in their degree, and in their combinations with other principles; and, in the innumerable migrations of mankind, they are modified by their own previous effects in a prior climate, and a prior state of society.*

* See Dr S. Smith's Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species.

"India," says Bishop Heber, "has been always, and long before the Europeans came hither, a favourite theatre for adventurers from Persia, Greece, Tartary, Turkey, and Arabia, all white men, and all in their turn possessing themselves of wealth and power. These circumstances must have greatly contributed to make a fair complexion fashionable. It is remarkable, however, to observe how surely all these classes of men in a few generations, even without any intermarriage with the Hindoos, assume the deep olive tint, little less dark than a Negro, which seems natural to the climate. The Portuguese natives form unions among themselves alone, or, if they can, with Europeans. Yet the Portuguese have, during a three hundred years' residence in India, become as black as Caffres. Surely this goes far to disprove the assertion, which is sometimes made, that climate alone is insufficient to account for the difference between the Negro and the European. It is true, that in the Negro are other peculiarities which the Indian has not, and to which the Portuguese colonist shows no symptom of approximation, and which undoubtedly do not appear to follow so naturally from the climate, as that swarthiness of complexion which is the sole distinction between the Hindoo and the European. But if heat produces one change, other peculiarities of climate may produce other and additional changes, and when such peculiarities have 3 or 4000 years to operate in, it is not easy to fix any limits to their power. . . . . Thus, while hardship, additional exposure, a greater degree of heat, and other circumstances, with which we are unacquainted, may have deteriorated the Hindoo into a Negro, opposite causes may have changed him into the progressively lighter tints of the

Chinese, the Persian, the Turk, the Russian, and the Englishman."

Mr Campbell, who, a few years ago, made a journey into the interior of Africa, several hundred miles north from the Cape of Good Hope, remarks that the complexion of the inhabitants assumed a deeper hue—uniformly becoming darker till it became quite black as he approached the equator.

There is a colony of Jews, at Cochin, upon the coast of Malabar, who are now as black as the other Malabarians, who are hardly a shade lighter than the people of Guinea, Benin, or Angola.

"Men are the same," says Dean Milner, "in every age and climate, since the transgression of our first parents; and the identity of the common stock from which the human race has descended, is perhaps as clearly evinced by the manifest similarity of the depraved dispositions of the mind, as by the concurrence and agreement of those bodily marks and distinctions which are pointed out by natural historians as essentially constituting particular classes of beings. If the latter has been thought more to this purpose than the former, the advantage arises, I think, merely from this circumstance, that objects of the senses affect us sooner and more universally than considerations which are purely intellectual." Whoever has resided for any length of time in foreign countries will see the force of this remark, respecting the fact of a common origin, arising from moral resemblance.

In opposition to the Mosaic account of the creation, and of the manner in which the earth was peopled, both at the beginning, and after the flood, it is often argued, and, by writers of a certain class, generally taken for

granted, that, "in the earliest periods of time, mankind, in every part of the globe, were in a state of absolute savagism."

This opinion forms the basis of Lord Kaimes's well-known work called "Sketches of the History of Man." To the theory there advanced, an answer, soon after its publication, appeared in "Two Letters on the Savage State," by the late Dr Doeg of Stirling. In these letters the following propositions are illustrated by a great number of particulars collected from ancient and modern history:—

"1st. The more populous and extensive kingdoms and societies were civilized, at a period prior to the records of history: the presumption therefore is, that these were civilized from the beginning.

"2d. No people who were once in a cultivated state, and, in process of time, degenerated into the savage or barbarous state, have ever recovered their pristine condition, without foreign aid. This furnishes a presumptive argument, that man, once a savage, would never have raised himself from that hopeless state.

"3d. None of the nations which were savages or barbarians, at the period of their first appearance in history, have ever been known to move one step forward towards a civilized state, till impelled by some external circumstance; a phenomenon which does not seem to favour the progressive motion of the human species towards a state of civilisation.

"4th. There appears in savages a natural and rooted aversion to a civilized state. This furnishes a strong presumption, that, by the efforts of their natural genius alone, they never would have raised themselves above their original character.

"5th. The most judicious and the most enlightened sages of antiquity entertained the most exalted notions of the piety, virtue, wisdom, and justice of the primitive men. . . . If we can depend upon their opinion, there must always have existed, in some region of the globe, a society of civilized people.

"6th. The idea of a state of universal savagism seems to have sprung from the chimerical cosmogonies of *Mochus, Democritus, Epicurus*, &c. These cosmogonies, nor the consequences of them, were never admitted by the wise and sober sects of philosophers.

"7th. The notion of a *golden age*, which, at one time, *universally* prevailed, is inconsistent with the universal extent of the empire of savagism.

"8th. There seems to be in human nature an innate propensity towards degeneracy, even in a state of the highest improvement. The consequence is obvious.

"9th. The period immediately succeeding the deluge, if such an event actually took place, must have been remarkable for piety. The sense of duty and a divine providence must have been deeply impressed upon the minds of men, and that impression must, for some ages, have prevented the patriarchs from falling into the savage state." "In many parts of the world," says Dr Doeg, "more especially in the East, we discover an infinite number of proper names composed of terms importing some attribute of the Deity," and after adducing proofs of this, he adds, "I have this moment before me a roll of names, collected for the purpose, which would carry us round a great part of the globe."

"10th. Civilisation and improvements of every kind have always been carried to the highest pitch of perfection in large and populous societies. In savages,

the social appetite never reaches beyond their own sept, or horde, and, consequently, is too weak and too confined to dispose them to unite into large communities, and, of course, had all mankind been once in the savage state, they never could have arrived at any considerable degree of civilisation.

"In the earliest ages all over the globe, we meet with names of persons, places, offices, dignities, alluding to, or formed from, names, epithets, attributes, of the Deity, or, at least, from objects of religious worship. This appearance indicates a devout turn of mind, and consequently a state of things greatly superior to that which is contended for by the gentlemen of your Lordship's party. The religious enthusiasm of the ages of heroism was certainly derived from the devotional character of the primitive men, which is a proof almost demonstrative, that savagism was not the original state of mankind."

At the end of the first letter, the following challenge is given on the subject; "Upon the whole, I am persuaded your Lordship would oblige not a few of your unlearned readers, as well as myself, would you be condescending enough *to point out some* ONE *state, nation, or society* which was once confessedly composed of savages, and did actually, without foreign assistance of any kind, by the gradual exertion of its internal powers, after passing successively through all the steps and stages specified in your *Sketches*, at length arrive at a state of complete humanity and civilisation."

Soon after the publication of these letters, Lord Kaimes requested Dr Doeg, who resided in his neighbourhood at Stirling, to visit him; when, after much discussion, his lordship candidly and fully acknowledged

that his own theory, as contained in his book, was erroneous, and his opponent right.

But it is not enough, that every attempt to disprove the authority of any of the numerous facts which the Scripture records, has failed; these facts are also confirmed in a very striking manner by the traditions of all nations.

In answer to Mr Hume's assertion, that the Books of Moses are corroborated by no concurring testimony," Dr Campbell of Aberdeen replies, "As little, say I, invalidated by any *contradicting* testimony; and both for this plain reason, because there is no human composition that can be compared with this in respect of antiquity. But though this book is not corroborated by the concurrent testimony of any coeval histories, because if there ever were such histories they are not now extant: it is not therefore destitute of all collateral evidence. The following examples of this kind of evidence deserve some notice, The division of time into weeks, which has obtained in many countries, for instance, among the Egyptians, Chinese, Indians, and northern barbarians,—nations whereof some had little or no intercourse with others, and were not even known by name to the Hebrews,—the tradition which in several places prevailed concerning the primeval chaos from which the world arose,—the production of all living creatures out of water and earth, by the efficiency of a Supreme Mind,—the formation of man, last of all, in the image of God, and his being vested with dominion over the other animals,—the primitive state of innocence and happiness,—the subsequent degeneracy of mankind,—their destruction by a flood, and the preservation of one family in a vessel. Nay, which is still

stronger, I might plead the vestiges of some such catastrophe as the deluge, which the shells and other marine bodies that are daily dug out of the bowels of the earth, in places remote from the sea, do clearly exhibit to us. I might urge the traces, which still remain in ancient histories, of the migrations of people and of science from Asia (which hath not improperly been styled the *cradle of the arts*) into many parts both of Africa and Europe. I might plead the coincidence of those migrations, and of the origin of states and kingdoms, with the time of the dispersion of the posterity of Noah."

Respecting the division of time into weeks, Dr Campbell remarks, "The judicious reader will observe, that there is a great difference between the concurrence of nations in the division of time into *weeks*, and their concurrence in the other periodical divisions, into *years*, *months* and *days*. These divisions arise from such natural causes, as are everywhere obvious; the annual and diurnal revolutions of the sun, and the revolution of the moon. The division into *weeks*, on the contrary, seems perfectly arbitrary; consequently, its prevailing in distant countries, among nations which had no communication with one another, affords a strong presumption, that it must have been derived from some tradition, (as that of the creation), which hath been older than the dispersion of mankind into different regions."

To this it may be added, that the whole of the fifteen southern constellations yield their testimony to the ten first chapters of Genesis. First, the constellation of the Ship: secondly, the altar, with its vast body of fire and smoke ascending near the triangle, the remark-

able Egyptian symbol of Deity: thirdly, the Sacrificer; fourthly, the Beast about to be sacrificed: fifthly, the Raven: sixthly, the Cup of Libation: seventhly, eighthly, and ninthly, the greater and lesser Dog, and the Hare, situated so near to Orion, the great and iniquitous hunter both of men and beasts. The whole of the remaining constellations of the southern hemisphere are composed of aquatic objects or animals, and may be considered as pointedly alluding to a general deluge.

Traditions more or less distinct, which corroborate the facts recorded by Moses, and which prove the common origin of mankind, are found, on the whole, to be uniform in all parts of the world. They have not only been verbally handed down, but have subsisted in the religious observances and practices of all nations. These are not confined to the old world, but extend also to the new. The first discoverers of America observed even there a reverence for the Sabbath, and an acquaintance with many of the appointments of the Mosaic institution, and of the early history of the world. The contents of some of the manuscripts are curious in a high degree. One is a cosmogony, which contains a tradition of the mother of mankind having fallen from her first state of happiness and innocence; and she is generally represented as accompanied by a serpent. We find also the idea of a great inundation overwhelming the earth, from which a single family escaped on a raft. There is a history of a pyramidal edifice raised by the pride of men, and destroyed by the anger of the gods. The ceremony of ablution is practised at the birth of children. All these circumstances, and many more, led the priests who accompanied the Spanish

army at the time of the conquest, to the belief that at some very distant epocha, Christianity, or at least Judaism, had been preached in the new continent. "I think, however," says Mr Humboldt, in his Researches, "I may affirm, from the knowledge we have lately acquired of the sacred books of the Hindoos, that, in order to explain the analogy of these traditions, we have no need to recur to the western part of Asia, since similar traditions, of high and venerable antiquity, are found among the followers of Brama, and among the Shamans of the eastern Steppes of Tartary."

The rite of sacrifice, which to Mr Hume appeared absurd, and which certainly did not originate from what is called the light of nature, has been found to be practised in every part of the world.

The doctrine of the Trinity has been clearly traced through nearly all the Pagan nations of antiquity, and through the northern countries of Europe. It has prevailed throughout Asia, and is also distinctly found among the nations of America. In South America, they have three images of the Sun, called APOMPTI, CHURUNTI, and INTIQUAOQUI, which signify FATHER AND LORD SUN, the SON SUN, and the BROTHER SUN. In like manner, they named the three images of Chuquilla, which is the god that rules in the region of the air. In Cuquisaco, they worship a great idol, whom they call TONGATONGA, which signifies ONE IN THREE, and THREE IN ONE. In short, this is a doctrine extensively diffused through all nations; a doctrine established at once in regions so distant as Japan and Peru, immemorially throughout the whole extent of Egypt and India, and equally acknowledged in the mountains of Thibet, and the vast deserts of Siberia.

Whether we consult the religion of the Greeks, the Goths, or the Hindoos, we everywhere meet with a mediatorial deity, engaged in combat with an envenomed serpent.* And a belief that the place of punishment is full of serpents, equally pervades the Gothic, the Persian and the Hindoo mythologies, Can any one imagine that such unlikely combinations, unaccountable except on the ground of a common descent and revelation from God, that, for instance, of a Triune God, could have accidentally found a place among men, originally separate and remote from each other?

Traditions have been traced over the globe of the creation—of the Sabbath-day—of Paradise—of the fall of man—of the serpent—of the promised Messiah—of Cain and Abel—of the longevity of the Patriarchs—of the number of generations between Adam and Noah—of the Deluge—of the dove sent out by Noah—of the rainbow as a sign—of the number of persons preserved in the ark—of Noah and his three sons—of the Tower of Babel—of the destruction of Sodom and

* The belief of witchcraft, or the power of the serpent, has prevailed very extensively. Bryant, in his commentary on the word *Oph*, remarks, that a serpent, in the Egyptian language, was called *Ob* or *Aub*, and that Obion is still the Egyptian name for a serpent. Moses, he observes, in the name of God forbids the Israelites ever to enquire of the demon *Ob*, which is translated charmer or wizard. The woman at Endor, he adds, is called *Oub* or *Ob*, translated Pythonissa; and *Obaois* was the name of the basilisk or royal serpent, emblem of the Sun, and an ancient oracular deity in Africa. The belief of the power of *Obi* greatly prevails in Africa. Edwards, in his History of the West Indies, gives a full account of the effects of this belief among the negroes there.

Gomorrah, with a variety of circumstances illustrating these facts.*

The great tower in the temple of Belus at Babylon, is supposed to have been the same which was built there at the confusion of tongues. As described by Strabo, it was one of the most wonderful works in the world. Although it fell short of the greatest of the Egyptian pyramids (which was a square of 700 feet on every side, while this was but of 600), yet it far exceeded it in height—the perpendicular measure of that pyramid being 481 feet, and that of the tower 600. It is particularly attested by several authors to have been all built of bricks and bitumen, as the Scripture tells us the tower of Babel was. Herodotus says that the going up to it was by stairs round it on the outside. When Alexander took Babylon, Callisthenes the philosopher, who accompanied him thither, found that they had astronomical observations for 1903 years backwards from that time, which carried up the account as high as the 115th year after the flood, which was within fifteen years after the tower of Babel was built.

Concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, Tacitus relates, that a tradition still prevailed in his days of certain powerful cities having been destroyed by thunder and lightning, and of the rich plains in which they were situated having been burnt up. He adds, that evident traces of such a catastrophe remained, while the parched and burnt soil had lost its fertility. This historian concludes with expressing his own belief in this awful

* See Faber's Horæ Mosaicæ, and Maurice's Indian Antiquities.

judgment, derived from an attentive consideration of the country in which it was said to have happened. In a similar manner, Strabo, after describing the nature of the lake Asphaltis, adds, that the whole of its appearance gives an air of probability to the *prevailing tradition*, that thirteen cities, the chief of which was Sodom, were once destroyed and swallowed up by earthquakes, fire, and an inundation of boiling sulphureous water.

The account which Lucian, a professed scoffer at all religions, who lived in the second century, has given of the tradition of the flood, in his Dialogues, is as follows. Having visited the temple of Hierapolis, he says,—"The popular story is, that this temple was founded by Deucalion, the Scythian, in whose time the great flood is said to have happened. I was no stranger to the account of it by the Greeks, which is as follows: 'Not one of us now living is descended from the original race of men, who all perished, and we, numerous as we are, are no other than a second race, sprung from Deucalion. The Aborigines, we are informed, were apt to be very arrogant, full of mischief, and continually transgressing the laws, inhospitable to strangers, deaf to supplications, and would say or swear any thing; in which offences they were overtaken by the severity of justice. The earth on a sudden opened its sluices, heavy showers of rain came down, the rivers swelled, the sea rose till the waters every where prevailed, and every mortal was drowned except Deucalion alone, whose discretion and piety were such, that he was spared, and became the father of a new generation. Having a large chest, he put his wives and children in it, and then went into it himself;

which was no sooner done than there came to him boars, and horses, and lions, and serpents, and in short every species of land animals, all in pairs. He took them all in; and Jupiter had ordered it so, that they neither did him, nor one another, the least injury, but lived and sailed together in perfect harmony, during the continuance of the flood, all in the same chest.' This I was told by the Greeks. In addition to which, the Hierapolitans relate, that a large chasm was provided in their country to absorb the water; and that Deucalion, after seeing it thus disposed of, raised altars, and built a temple to Juno, over the chasm. It was but a small hole in the earth when I saw it; but how much larger it might have been formerly, when it held so much, I cannot take upon me to say. However, as a proof of what they advance, water is brought twice in the year from the sea to the temple, not only by the priests, but from the whole country far and near, by Syrians, Arabians, and great multitudes beyond the Euphrates. It is emptied in the temple, and runs into the opening below, which, small as it is, takes in such a quantity as is truly amazing. This it seems was a law of Deucalion to perpetuate the memory of his deliverance from the general calamity."

Various Pagan historians speak of Moses, the lawgiver of the Jews: Diodorus Siculus calls him a man of most superior wisdom and courage. He mentions the departure of Israel from Egypt; of their advance into Palestine, and seizure of a number of cities, particularly Jerusalem. He speaks of their worship, their tribes, their code of laws, by which they were kept separate from every other people; of the priesthood established in one family; of judges, instead of

kings, being appointed to decide all their controversies, and the supreme authority being vested in the chief priest; he adds, that Moses concluded the volume of his laws, by claiming for them Divine inspiration. Strabo also mentions various particulars respecting Moses. Eupolimus likewise celebrates him as being the first wise man, and the inventor of letters, which the Phœnicians received from the Jews, and the Greeks from the Phœnicians.

In the decree issued by the magistrates of Pergamos, fourty-four years before Christ, there is the following passage: "Our ancestors were friendly to the Jews, even in the days of Abraham, who was the father of all the Hebrews, as we have also found it set down in our public records."

Josephus, as has already been noticed, appeals to the public records of different nations, and to a great number of books extant in his time, but now lost, as indisputable evidence, in the opinion of the Heathen world, for the truth of the most remarkable events in the history of the people of Israel.

A copious narrative of the Jewish legislator is given by Artapanus, in which the oppression of the Israelites; the flight of Moses into Arabia, and his subsequent marriage; a circumstance similar to that of the burning bush; his Divine commission to deliver his countrymen; the transformation of his rod into a serpent; the various plagues of Egypt; the spoiling of the Egyptians; the passage through the Red Sea; the destruction of Pharaoh and his host; and the support of the Israelites by manna in the wilderness, are all mentioned. Moses is further said to have been the person whom the Greeks call Museus, the preceptor of the celebrated

Orpheus. The same author asserts, that the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea was not unknown to the Heliopolitans, who gave the following account of that supernatural transaction: "The king of Egypt, as soon as the Jews had departed from his country, pursued them with an immense army, bearing along with him the consecrated animals. But Moses having, by the Divine command, struck the waters with his rod, they parted asunder, and afforded a free passage to the Israelites. The Egyptians attempted to follow them, when fire suddenly flashed in their faces, and the sea, returning to its usual channel, brought a universal destruction upon their whole army." The circumstance of the Egyptians being struck with lightning, as well as being overwhelmed by the waves, is mentioned in the 77th Psalm, although not noticed in the Pentateuch.

Diodorus Siculus relates, that the Ichthyophagi, who lived near the Red Sea, had a tradition handed down to them through a long line of ancestors, that the whole bay was once laid bare to the very bottom, the waters retiring to the opposite shores; and that they afterwards returned to their accustomed channel with a most tremendous revulsion. Even to this day, the inhabitants of the neighbourhood of Corondel preserve the remembrance of a mighty army having been once drowned in the bay, which Ptolemy calls Clysma.

The very country where the event is said to have happened, in some degree bears testimony to the accuracy of the Mosaical narrative. The Scriptural *Etham* is still called *Etti*. The wilderness of *Shur*, the mountain of *Sinai*, and the country of *Paran*, are still known by the same names; and *Marah*, *Elath*, and

Midian, are names still familiar to the ears of the Arabs. The grove of Elim yet remains, and its twelve fountains have neither increased nor diminished since the days of Moses.

The names mentioned by Moses as assigned to Eastern countries and cities by the patriarchs, their original occupiers and founders, are for the most part the very names by which they were anciently known all over the East; many of them were afterwards translated, with little variation, by the Greeks, in their systems of geography. In one short chapter, Moses has traced to their original all the inhabitants of the earth, from the Caspian and Persian seas to the extreme Gades, and recorded at once the period and occasion of their dispersion.

The remarkable miracle by which Joshua was enabled to arrest the diurnal revolutions of the great luminaries of heaven, is also another event corroborated by tradition, and in such a manner as to shame the cavils of the scorner. It is recorded that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still on Gibeon. The slaughter of the armies of the five kings commenced after he had gone "up all night from Gilgal." He came upon the enemy "suddenly." It was during the pursuit which immediately commenced, that Joshua, in the strength of the God of Israel, uttered that command which must have confounded the worshippers of the sun and moon. The sacred writer declares, that "there was no day like that, before it or after it." The fabled fall of Phaeton, and the history of Hercules, both establish the fact, that it was known to the recorders of ancient tradition, that there had been a *night*, like which was no night before it or after it. In the history of Hercules, it is fabled

that Jupiter caused a long night—a night of three ordinary nights. Now, in consequence of the miracle wrought in Palestine, it is obvious that throughout the greater part of the known world, instead of the return of the *day*, they had continued *night*. At the time the revolution of the globe was suspended, as the sun was rising on Gibeon in the land of Canaan, the western world was of course in darkness. To this then may be traced the fabled destruction of Phaeton, when he attempted to direct the chariot of the sun. Conflicting accounts would, however, be received from the more eastern countries, some of which would have had twilight, and part even might have just seen the sun arrested in his rising, or heard that it might be seen during the period of their long night.

But still more extraordinary testimony to the occurrence of the miracle has been lately brought to light from the records of Hindoo mythology. As in the fables of Western Paganism, we read of an extraordinary *night;* so in the traditions of the eastern hemisphere, we hear of a day of extraordinary length. This fact is incontestably proved by the Skanda Purana, where it is related, that at the end of the Suttya Jug, or golden age, a mountain arose, and for a time impeded the progress of the sun, till by miraculous agency, at the prayer of Agastya, the obstacle was removed, the mountain sunk into its place, and the sun was permitted to pursue his wonted course.

M. Cuvier remarks that it is now clearly proved that the famous astronomical tables of the Hindoos, from which it had been attempted to assign a prodigious antiquity, have been calculated backwards. One of the revolutions which have affected the globe, of

which the Hindoos speak, is described in terms nearly corresponding with the account given by Moses; to which he adds a note from Sir William Jones's Memoirs, where it is stated that their three first *Avatars*, or descents of Vishnu, relate no less clearly to a *universal deluge*, in which eight persons only were saved. Having referred to the histories of the Assyrians and Chinese, he observes,—"It is not to be conceived that mere chance should have thus given rise to so striking a coincidence between the traditions of the Assyrians, the Hindoos, and the Chinese, in attributing the origins of their respective monarchies so nearly to the same epoch, of about four thousand years before the present day. The ideas of these three nations, which have so few features of resemblance, or rather, which are so entirely dissimilar in language, religion, and laws, could not have so exactly agreed on this point, unless it had been founded upon truth." A little afterwards, speaking again of the deluge, M. Cuvier adds,—"Thus all nations which possess any records or ancient traditions, uniformly declare that they have been recently renewed after a grand revolution in nature. This concurrence of historical and traditionary testimonies respecting a comparatively recent renewal of the human race, and their agreement with the proofs that are furnished by the operations of nature, which have been already considered, might certainly warrant us in refraining from the examination of certain equivocal monuments, which have been brought forward by some authors in support of a contrary opinion. But even this examination, to judge of it by some attempts already made, will probably do nothing

else than add some more proofs to that which is furnished by tradition."

Sir William Jones has very satisfactorily traced the origin of all the people of the earth to the three roots, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, according to the account given in the 10th chapter of Genesis. The fact mentioned by him is worthy of remark, that the first dynasties of Peruvian kings are dignified, exactly as those of India are, by the name of the Sun and Moon. He has also shown, that the traditions of the present heathen nations of Asia are not of more ancient authority than the traditions of the ancient nations of Asia and Europe. "States and empires," he says, "could scarce have assumed a regular form till fifteen or sixteen hundred years before the Christian epoch; and for the first thousand years of that period, we have no history unmixed with fable, except that of the turbulent and variable, but eminently distinguished nation descended from Abraham."

"The Chinese themselves," he observes, "do not pretend that any historical monument existed among them, in the age of Confucius, more ancient than 1100 years before the Christian epoch." And "the dawn," he says, "of true Indian history appears only three or four centuries before the Christian era; the preceding ages being clouded by allegory or fable."

In viewing the various topics which have come under our notice in this chapter, what striking proofs do we find, in every part of the world, of the truth of the facts recorded in the Bible! The records of ancient nations have been ransacked by the enemies of Christianity, but the most perverse ingenuity has

toiled in vain to invalidate a solitary fact contained in Scripture history. Fiction could not for a moment abide the test of such an ordeal, but truth, always consistent with itself, acquires an accession of evidence from every thing with which it stands connected. It is not enough to say that every effort to cloud the testimony of Moses and the Prophets has signally failed, for experience has still farther proved that all the power of perverted genius and misapplied learning has only served to bring to light some corroborative circumstance which had not previously been observed. The motions of the heavenly bodies, the geological structure of the earth, and the fossil remains with which it abounds, in an extraordinary degree combine to confirm those facts which the concurrent traditions of all nations have likewise handed down to posterity. Every thing around us proclaims that we are standing on the grave of a former world; that this earth has undergone some mighty convulsion; from the Nile to the Ganges, and from China to Peru, the tradition of Noah's flood in one way or other may be traced. But it is the Bible, and the Bible only, which unlocks the mystery, and furnishes a consistent and rational account of that awful catastrophe, while it tells us of the righteous indignation of Him who said, "I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth." In like manner we have seen that other events recorded in Scripture, whether of a local or general description, are, in one way or other, perpetuated in the traditions or the customs of the heathen, while no contradictory evidence can be produced from any quarter.

And is all this the result of chance? Are we to believe that the mythology of the Greeks and Ro-

mans, that the traditions of Egypt, of India, of South America, and other heathen countries, that the ruins of ancient cities, together with the natural appearances of the earth itself, all combine to witness to the truth of Scripture, and yet that these things are to be regarded much in the light of curious coincidences? As soon might we believe, like the Epicureans, that the world was produced by a fortuitous concourse of atoms. No; the testimony drawn from such sources never can be fairly impeached. It is a species of evidence which commends itself to the common sense of mankind, and it derives additional strength from the consideration that it cannot be counterfeited, and never can be explained away. It carries with it conviction which nothing but prejudice can resist, while, like the current of a mighty tide, it bears us onward to the inevitable conclusion that the Bible is the Book of God.

CHAPTER XX.

TESTIMONY TO THE MESSIAH FROM THE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL.

CHRISTIANITY appeared in the world in an age of knowledge. This was necessary in order to stamp the evidence of its truth. In an age of darkness a system of religion might be imposed on mankind, and gaining strength by habit, take a firm hold of the minds of men. But this cannot be alleged by the adversaries of the Christian system. It was in the

enlightened period of the Augustan age that it appeared. It was a period when the arts and sciences had attained the greatest improvement. It was tried by every form of ingenuity, yet it stood the test. It was assaulted on every side, but the bulwark of the Faith could not be shaken. Its persecutors became its preachers. Its enemies became martyrs to its truth. All opposition was ineffectual. It spread throughout the empire with most astonishing rapidity. It was in the polished cities of Corinth, of Athens, and of Rome, that the first disciples triumphed and bled. They came forth at once into open day. They affected no concealment, but everywhere, even before the Court of Areopagus, and in the palaces of the Cæsars, preached Jesus and the resurrection.

Jesus Christ, in laying the foundations of his kingdom, did not act as the wisdom of this world would dictate. He did not deliver his instructions in a general and connected system. Had it been possible that any human philosopher could have conceived the vast idea of a religion that should be universal, and adapted to every age and condition of man, this would have appeared the only way in which it could have been effected. But the manner which he who knew the human heart has adopted, proves his unerring wisdom, as the success that attended the work he undertook, demonstrates his almighty power.

The successful promulgation of Christianity in the first ages, viewed in connexion with the obstacles that opposed it, affords the most satisfactory evidence of its truth. Had it been calculated to foster the prejudices of the Jews, or flatter the pride of Gentile wisdom, its rapid introduction into the world would not have been

so wonderful. But it was equally opposed to the prejudices of both the Jew and the Greek. Yet in a short time it prevailed over both Judaism and the worship of the gods.

When Jesus Christ appeared in the character of the Messiah, the difficulties of the work he proposed, on the one hand, and the means he employed to surmount them, on the other, seem entirely disproportionate. The design was, to supersede the Jewish economy; to subvert the established religions of all other nations, supported, as they everywhere were, not only by the civil power, but also by the most deeply-rooted prejudices; to overthrow all those favourite systems which the pride of philosophy had so industriously reared; *to change, in short, the whole religious and moral state of the world.* A more stupendous and difficult undertaking could not be contemplated, and could only have been effected by Him "who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." To form a proper idea of this work, and of the testimony which its accomplishment affords to the divine character of the Messiah, it is necessary to attend to the peculiar circumstances in which it was undertaken.

Polytheism had been established in the world for many ages, and the body of the people everywhere, except the Jews, were firmly attached to it. "If you search the world," says Plutarch, "you may find a city without walls, without towers, or any means of defence; but a city without its gods, without religion, you will not find." Something in the prospect of death, and of a future state, is necessary to support the human mind, unless being sophisticated and misled by vain reasoning, it is steeled by infidelity. This

is more frequently the case with those who move in the higher ranks of life, than with such as have received a less refined education, and who have enjoyed little leisure for speculation. Having imbibed some fashionable system which flatters the pride of their hearts, and at the same time *sets them free from many troublesome restraints*, they often contrive to go on with tolerable ease, which, as the mind becomes more and more habitually hardened, will naturally increase. With those who are placed in the lower walks of life, this state of mind is not so common. Most of the latter, however, are satisfied with the outward form of the religion of the country in which they live, whatever it may be. But this, in general, they must have. And as enquiry on such a subject is irksome, and as those who are satisfied with its outward form without its power, have taken their religion entirely on trust, nothing inflames every passion of their minds to such violence as that which disturbs their repose, and brings their religious notions into doubt. In addition to all this, which is common to every age and form of worship, the religion of Paganism being entirely suited to the carnal mind, it possessed many charms in the eyes of the people at large. The idolatrous sacrifices were attended with feasting to excess, and all kinds of sensual indulgence.* With

* It was not without strong temptation that the Israelites were so prone to forsake the pure worship of Jehovah, and to mix with their heathen neighbours in their idolatries. Many who, ignorant of their own hearts, express surprise at the frequent apostasies of the people of Israel, are not aware of the powerful incentives they had to join in such revels. When

the greatest indignation, then, would the mass of Pagan idolaters view the introduction of the pure and spiritual Christian worship, which at once went to overthrow their religion, and to annihilate their favourite revels and sports.

The pride of the higher classes among Polytheists, on the appearance of Christianity, must also have been alarmed. An exclusive religion which required unqualified submission, stood directly opposed to their general habits, while the humility it inculcated would be held by them in utter abhorrence. The man of the world, who "cared for none of these things," would be enraged at this intrusion, and at the disturbance which the new principles of this religion could not fail to excite. The sensualist, intent on his pleasures, would detest a system which made no composition with his lusts; but, on the contrary, threatened the severest punishment on account of actions to which he had never heard the slightest blame attached. The magistrate, who employed the established religion as an engine for governing the people, would naturally apprehend that if it were subverted, his authority would be undermined. The most decided opposition might also with certainty be anticipated from the whole body of the Pagan Priesthood, whose office, and credit, and influence, and revenues, were all at stake. The philosophers, too, however they might disagree among themselves, would firmly unite against a religion, which, besides pouring contempt on their vain speculations,

they had set up the golden calf in the wilderness, and sacrificed to it, "the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play."

went to cut up all their systems, root and branch; pointedly declared, of the boasted leaders of Greek and Roman science, that professing themselves to be wise, they had become fools; exposed their vanity and selfishness, and depicted their immorality, in common with that of all the rest of the Pagan world, in colours of the deepest dye. In addition to all this, the teachers of this new doctrine were Jews, who were abhorred and despised by the other nations. The violent and determined opposition, then, which the Christian religion must necessarily encounter from the whole united body of the heathen world, independently of the natural enmity of the carnal mind against God, is sufficiently manifest.

If this must be its reception from the Gentile nations, what must it experience from the Jews? The Jews were in possession of the oracles of God: theirs was the true religion, confirmed by the most indubitable proofs, so that the conviction of its divine origin was riveted on their minds. But veiled under an outward form of ceremonies, instituted as a barrier against idolatry, and intended to shadow forth a more spiritual dispensation, that religion was misunderstood by the body of the people who clung to the form, and rejected the substance, so that except "a small remnant" of the true worshippers of God, they were as carnal in their hearts as their heathen neighbours.

But, however grossly the Jews misunderstood the object of the Mosaic dispensation, as was proved when the Messiah appeared, still all of them had a firm persuasion that it was of divine appointment. They could trace its origin from the days of Abraham, through a period of 2000 years, and were possessed of a distinct

written record of the revelations which had been made from that period, and of all the privileges which their forefathers had enjoyed. In the strongest manner, too, they cherished the flattering idea, that, being chosen as the depositaries of the oracles of God, their nation was to continue in the exclusive possession of so distinguished a trust. They were plainly told, indeed, that it was not on account of their superior goodness or worth, in any respect, that they had been thus singled out from among the nations; and their own Scriptures, from their commencement, contained intimation, that the blessing which God in mercy intended for all was to flow through them to the other nations, who were consequently at length to participate in the same advantages. Of this, the most express information was from time to time communicated by their prophets; yet the whole was disregarded by them, and against every idea of the kind they entertained the most inveterate prejudice.

A priesthood, besides consisting of a whole tribe, had been appointed from the time of their leaving Egypt (a period of about 1500 years), which possessed much power, and enjoyed many valuable privileges. In the Jewish theocracy, there was no separation between what is called church and state. The civil and religious parts of their constitution were not merely in union one with another, they were actually identified. The civil authority, then, of the magistrates, and the religious pre-eminence of the priesthood, were inseparable. The one could not exist for a moment without the other. But the appearance of the Messiah was at once to bear testimony to the divine mission of Moses, and to terminate that dispensation. This would, of

course, abolish the priesthood, change the government, and put an end to the exclusive privileges of the Jewish nation. The reception, then, which the doctrine of Jesus Christ, when he appeared among them, would experience from the Jews, might be easily anticipated. Accordingly, when he came to his own, his own received him not. Of this rejection of the Messiah by the Jews, their prophets had given many and faithful warnings. "Who hath believed our report?—When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men," And except that "small remnant who were looking for the consolation of Israel," without whom they would have "been as Sodom, and made like unto Gomorrah," the expectation and the hopes of all the rest were fixed on the appearance of an earthly conqueror.

If, then, on the grounds before described, the opposition of the Pagan world to the religion of Jesus Christ was likely to be great, that of the Jewish people must have been tenfold. And so in effect it proved, both in its violence and in its continuance, as is manifest down even to the present hour. No sooner did Jesus Christ appear among them, designated as the Messiah by the enquiries of the strangers from the East, and by the time and place of his birth, than Herod the king "was alarmed, and *all Jerusalem with him*;" and, speaking after the manner of men, it was only by flight that his life was saved. After he came forward in his public character, the rulers immediately combined against him; and, in proportion as he more clearly advanced his claim as the King of Israel, the more decided and avowed did their opposition become. Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, the

most opposite and hostile sects, were at once reconciled and united against him; even Herod and Pontius Pilate were made friends. The heathen raged, the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together against the Lord and against his Messiah.

But is it not recorded, that "the common people heard him gladly?" Did he not himself say, "Blessed are ye poor?" It was, indeed, a distinguishing characteristic of the reign of the Messiah, (in this, as in every other respect, entirely dissimilar to the maxims and practice of the heathen philosophers), that to the poor the gospel was preached. To them, throughout the whole of the Scriptures, peculiar attention is manifested. They, too, have fewer external hinderances than the rich, to prevent them from listening to the word of life. In this respect, the circumstances of persons in the higher classes of society are generally very disadvantageous. From a greater measure of the fostered pride of understanding, from the entanglement of connexions by which they are more fettered, and from punctilious forms to which they are so much enslaved, the hinderances to the reception of the word of life are among them greatly increased. Jesus Christ himself taught, that certain situations in society have a greater tendency than others to harden, to blind, and to seduce the human heart. But the natural enmity of the mind of man against God is not affected by circumstances of life; it exerts itself in every condition. The gospel does not flatter men in any situation. The state of human nature is such, that it cannot be rectified by the most favourable combination of outward condition. The highest cultivation of learning, or the greatest

simplicity of ignorance,—the lowest or the loftiest station in which a man may be placed, cannot effect the smallest approach to a radical change of heart. Another remedy is required, which, when applied by the all-powerful influence of the Spirit of God, can alone produce the change, and in no circumstances whatever does that fail. No man, then, is blessed because he is poor, any more than because he is rich. Jesus indeed says, "Blessed are ye poor;" but, either he was immediately addressing and referring to his disciples, who were poor and blessed indeed, or he more briefly and parabolically expresses what he fully and plainly declares in the parallel passage, "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

Keeping these remarks in view, let us observe how the body of the people in Judea actually did receive Jesus Christ, and what was really the difference between their conduct and that of their rulers. The rulers, from the very first, were aware of their situation, and perceived their danger if Jesus should be acknowledged by them as the Messiah. Accordingly, their opposition from the beginning was decided. The people, on the other hand, who had neither power nor consequence to lose, were on that account much less susceptible of alarm. From their situation, too, they had better access, without exciting the jealousy of their friends and connexions, to witness the miracles of the Messiah. And when in these they observed the exertion of that power which he actually possessed, they were convinced that nothing could oppose him. Not doubting, therefore, that he was able to fulfil their expectations of conquest, of the worldly pre-eminence of their country, and of every secular advantage to themselves, they vehemently desired to make him a king. When at

any time, however, they discovered something of that spiritual doctrine which, under figures and parables, he all along taught, in every instance they were offended.

At the very commencement of his ministry in Nazareth, when, in the language of the prophet he disclosed the beneficent purposes of his mission, but still veiled, in a measure, under the figure of temporal good things, the people who heard him were at first struck with admiration; but when he proceeded to remind them that they owed all their exclusive privileges to the sovereign appointment of God, such a tumult was instantaneously excited, that he was obliged by miracle to deliver himself from their fury. On his telling them that they sought him, not because they saw the miracles, but because they did eat of the loaves and fishes and were filled, and called on them to believe on him whom God had sent, they instantly raised objections to his divine mission. When, again, under the figurative expressions of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, he intimated the nature of that spiritual life which must be derived from him, and the sovereign manner in which it is dispensed, many, even of those who had professed to be his disciples, "went back, and walked no more with him." Still, however, the hopes of the body of the people respecting his temporal greatness were in a measure maintained. The raising of Lazarus from the dead, just before he went up to Jerusalem for the last time, produced a very powerful effect; and a multitude of the people accompanied him into Jerusalem, with loud acclamations. Upon that occasion he took authoritative possession of the temple, and there publicly wrought miracles. This still supported the expectation

of the multitude ; and the rulers were so much aware of the prevailing spirit, that they feared to lay hands on him. But when his being apprehended sooner than they intended, had, by a concurrence of circumstances, taken place,—when the people once observed that he had quietly submitted to the power of their rulers, that his followers were dispersed, and that he himself was arraigned at their bar,—when they saw him condemned by the Roman government, and still no appearance of resistance, they at once lost all hope. The rulers had now no more reason to "fear the people." Although the city was then crowded, the Jews being collected at the passover from all quarters, he was without the smallest opposition or danger, led out openly to execution, while the violent exclamations of the enraged and disappointed multitude resounded from every quarter,—"Away with him, away with him! Crucify him, crucify him!"

The scene that followed, and those alarming events which accompanied his death, appear indeed at the time to have softened and overawed the hearts of many ; but they produced no decisive effect. And on the whole, with a few exceptions, the voice of the rulers and people among the Jews was raised in accents of unanimous condemnation, as soon as they came properly to apprehend how the mission and religion of Jesus Christ bore upon themselves, and to see in his death an end of their worldly expectations. Nearly the same scene was acted over again when his resurrection was proclaimed, and his disciples wrought miracles in attestation of it. From the first the rulers opposed, but were held in awe by the wavering of the multitude ; but at length, when his doctrine came to be better understood, the persecu-

tion of his followers began, in which all went hand in hand; and then commenced that opposition by the body of the Jewish nation, rich and poor, in which they have persevered to this day.

This general opposition of all ranks among the Jews, was strikingly displayed in the whole history of the apostle Paul after his conversion. On his addressing them from the stairs of the castle, and informing them of the commands he had received from his Master, to go and preach to the Gentiles, the people "cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live!"

What has been said will likewise account for the reception of John the Baptist. His appearance and doctrine not bespeaking any thing favourable to the rulers, they regarded him with coldness and suspicion. The multitude thronged to him, and to the last were not disappointed. His message was, "the kingdom of God is at hand;" but it did not then appear to them what kind of kingdom that was; and the general hopes of the people, during the whole course of his ministry, do not seem to have failed.

Such was the violent opposition which the Christian religion encountered, and with which it had to struggle when it appeared in the world. In the case of the Jews, this fact is established as we have seen by those authentic records which were published among themselves, and never contradicted. In that of the Gentiles, it does not rest merely on reasonings and analogies, such as those that have been adduced, however irrefragable and conclusive; it is grounded on incontestable historical testimony, which can neither be con-

tradicted nor evaded. The cruel persecutions to which Christians were subjected; the public edicts of the Roman government, the virulent and persevering attacks of philosophers and men of learning; and the ungovernable rage of the infuriated multitude, who loudly demanded that they should be thrown to the wild beasts —all bear, in accordance with the Jewish records, their unequivocal attestation in proof of the formidable obstacles which presented themselves to the introduction and progress of the Christian religion, against which the Jews and the Gentiles were equally arrayed. It appeared folly to the one, and a scandal to the other; and to both odious in the extreme. Let, then, the attitude in which the whole civilized world stood at the coming of the Messiah be considered, and let us next observe the instruments and means which were provided by Jesus Christ to encounter this opposition, to withstand its power, and to subdue its force.

The depressed circumstances in which the Messiah first appeared in the world, gave no indication of future greatness. He was indeed lineally descended from the Jewish kings; but the family in which he was born had fallen into very obscure circumstances. He was, in the language of the Prophet, the branch grown out of the roots of Jesse, denoting the low situation in which he was born. While every thing respecting him was truly great, all that was external seemed entirely the reverse. His want of the advantages of education corresponded with his outward circumstances. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" was at a very early period objected against him. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda and Simon? and

are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him." Such was the situation in which the leader in the great work of changing the religion of the world appeared.

The associates whom he chose as the instruments of his design, corresponded to this situation. They consisted of a few fishermen from the despised district of Galilee, and a publican. These he named his apostles, with whom he was to encounter all the learning and power of the Jewish priesthood and government, and whom he was afterwards to send forth to make known his name, and to extend his kingdom to the uttermost bounds of the earth. A more apparently inadequate and unpromising preparation for a design of such unparalleled magnitude cannot be conceived. The natural disqualifications of these men, without any advantages of education, having no knowledge of the world, and from their habits, little prepared to embrace such enlarged views, seemed to preclude every idea of success. In this stage of the history of Christianity, had any one seen them, habited in their usual attire, speaking the provincial dialect of their obscure district, a few "unlearned and ignorant men," and had the plan that was proposed been unfolded to him, what must have been his astonishment?

The total improbability of success seems equally apparent, if the means which they were to employ be considered. The doctrine they were to preach was directly opposed to the prejudices of men of every nation, and of every description. The doctrine of a crucified Saviour is aptly characterised by themselves, to be "to the Jews a stumblingblock, and to the Greeks foolishness." According to the Mosaic law,

a man hanged on a tree was to be reckoned accursed of God; and, among the Romans, crucifixion was the most degrading punishment, and no man but a slave as well as a criminal, could be subjected to this penalty. Yet from this doctrine of the cross, they were not for one moment to swerve. In declaring it, whatever opposition they might encounter, they were "to give way by subjection, no not for an hour." With this truth was inseparably connected the doctrine of human depravity, charging home guilt upon every man without exception. It proclaimed the wrath of God from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. And, upon all, without distinction, it enforced the necessity of pardon through the atonement of a crucified Saviour, of unqualified submission to every part of the doctrine of Christ, of the total relinquishment of every other mode of worship, and every other ground of hope of acceptance with God. The whole of this system was sure to encounter at once the pride and opposition of the human heart. If these messengers to the nations did not perceive all the difficulties at first,—of which, however, they had received full warning from their Master—they soon experienced them. They found the whole world in arms against them. The resentment of the unprincipled libertine, the indignation of the haughty moralist, the fierce passions of the multitude, and the rage of the civil magistrate, were equally excited. They were compelled to flee from city to city; every where to encounter contempt and all sorts of indignities; and at last to lay down their lives, in suffering a cruel and ignominious death.

But the success of the undertaking has been great.

No violence was used by his servants, by them not a drop of blood was shed; yet the prediction, that the Messiah should be "the light of the Gentiles," has been fully verified; and their idols having been "cast to the moles and to the bats." "The Lord," said the prophet 700 years before the event, "will be terrible unto them; for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen." And this change has been effected by fishermen and *Jews*. Within about thirty years after the death of Christ, the Apostle Peter had addressed an Epistle to believers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Within the same period, Paul had severally written to churches at Rome, at Corinth, throughout Galatia, at Ephesus, at Philippi, at Colosse, at Thessalonica, most of which places he had personally visited, as well as other great cities, such as Athens and Antioch. In one of his Epistles, he declares that the Gospel had gone into "all the world," and had been "preached to every creature which is under heaven."

"The most astonishing revolution in the human mind and in human manners, that was ever seen in any age, was thus effected without any human power, legal or illegal, and even against the united opposition of all the powers then in the world; and this, too, not in countries rude and uncivilized, but in the most humanized, the most learned, and the most polished part of the globe, within the Roman empire; no part of which was exempted from its sensible effects. If an infidel or sceptic can produce any thing like this effected by other religions, he may with some plausi-

bility compare Mahometanism, or any other human religion, with Christianity. But as the Gospel stands unrivalled in its manner of subduing the minds of men, the argument for its divinity from its propagation in the world, will remain invincible."

Let us take the account of the *extent* of the triumph of Christianity in the world, from the pen of an opponent who will not be suspected of exaggeration on this point. "While," says Mr Gibbon, "that great body" (the Roman empire) "was invaded by open violence, or undermined by slow decay, a pure and humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of men; grew up in silence and obscurity; derived new vigour from opposition; and finally erected the triumphant banner of the cross on the ruins of the Capitol. Nor was the influence of Christianity confined to the period or to the limits of the Roman empire. After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries, that religion is still professed by the nations of Europe, the most distinguished portion of human kind in arts and learning, as well as in arms. By the industry and zeal of the Europeans, it has been widely diffused to the most distant shores of Asia and Africa; and by the means of their colonies, it has been firmly established from Canada to Chili, in a world unknown to the ancients."

The outward submission of the nations, according to the above description, has indeed reached far beyond the internal change, which, operating individually, has been more limited; and the uttermost and most barbarous parts of the earth have not yet been all subdued. But while its energy has not ceased, the work is *still progressive;* and by what has already been

effected we are enabled to judge of what shall yet be accomplished.

But have the altars of paganism fallen, and have the deep corruptions of the human heart been assailed without resistance? Did the apostles succeed without a struggle, and triumph without an opponent; and has no attempt been made to invalidate the character which their writings assume? On the contrary, has any stone been left unturned, which could lead to the discovery of some defect? Has not every effort been employed to defeat the object of their mission, and every means been resorted to, to depreciate and invalidate their doctrine? Besides outward violence, attempts for these ends had been made from every possible quarter, with every weapon which genius and learning could supply. The attack has been continued for nearly eighteen centuries, from the rulers at Jerusalem, from Celsus the philosopher, and Julian the emperor, down to the latest and ablest writers of the present times. But all they have written and said, has only contributed to illustrate the religion of Jesus Christ; to elucidate his doctrine, and to confirm those parts of Scripture which had not before been so fully examined, or so well understood.

In assigning the *causes* of the SUCCESS of the Gospel, Mr Gibbon presents us with the following remarks. "Our curiosity is naturally prompted to enquire, by what means the Christian faith obtained so remarkable a victory over the established religions of the earth? To this enquiry an obvious but satisfactory answer may be returned, that it was owing to the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself, and to the ruling providence of its great Author. But as truth and reason seldom

find so favourable a reception in the world, and as the wisdom of Providence frequently condescends to use the passions of the human heart, and the general circumstances of mankind, as instruments to execute its purpose, we may still be permitted, though with becoming submission, to ask, not indeed what were the first, but what were the secondary causes of the rapid growth of the Christian church? It will perhaps appear, that it was most effectually forwarded and assisted by the five following causes:—1st, The inflexible, and, if we may use the expression, the intolerant zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit which, instead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moses. 2d, The doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth. 3d, The miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive church. 4th, The pure and austere morals of the Christians. 5th, The union and discipline of the Christian republic, which gradually formed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the Roman empire."

Nothing but the force of truth could have extorted from so determined an opposer of the Gospel, such a solution of his difficulty on the point Mr Gibbon here discusses. It is true, that, in his subsequent enquiry into the above causes, he does every thing in his power to warp, to confuse, to misrepresent, and to explain away their proper efficiency. But with all his art, and knowledge of history, and with all his mistatements which have again and again been exposed, he has not been able to twist them so as entirely to serve his purpose. His first answer, under the cover of which he

introduces his discussion,—if we add to it the indispensable influences of the Holy Spirit, for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost,—strikingly comprises the whole truth. There is much reality in his secondary causes, and not many objections need be made to them, although his reasoning on them is most insidious and false. His very improper application of the word "intolerant," in his first cause, cannot escape notice. It seems to be used much in the same way, and for the same purpose, as the words "*transgression*"* and "violation" of the laws of nature in Mr Hume's Essay on Miracles.

Let any one now reflect on the difficulties of the undertaking we have been considering, on the instruments and means by which these were to be overcome, and on the astonishing success with which it has been finally crowned: Let him then say if he can possibly account for that success without the interposition of Divine power and influence, and on any other principle than that announced by the apostles themselves,—"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, *through God*, to the pulling down of strongholds." Admit the inspiration of the apostles, with the miraculous power which attested the truth of their mission, together with the constant superintendence and promised presence and influence of their heavenly Master, and all is plain and naturally follows. Deny these;—deny, for example, the truth of the miracles, and difficulties equal to that of the undertaking itself

* The word transgression is generally used in a bad sense, as implying a certain degree of vice; and this circumstance, it is probable, commended it to Mr Hume's choice, in order to give a keener edge to his reasonings.

present themselves. "If," says Augustine, "ye will not believe the miracles of the apostles, ye must at least believe this miracle, that the world was by such instruments without miracles converted." The *pretence* of working miracles may very safely be risked, where the object is to give credit to a religion which is already established, and where all the civil power concurs. But this was not the situation of the apostles. Their miracles were to be performed, not to support confirmed systems of worship, but to set them aside. They must then have been real, or they could have effected nothing. No one was more sensible than the apostles themselves of their own natural disqualification for the service in which they were engaged. "We have," say they, "this treasure in earthen vessels—our sufficiency is of God."

They were sent out when the Roman empire, the strongest government that ever had been on earth, was at the zenith of its power, and when learning and philosophy had risen to their greatest height. Yet they triumphed over all. For, "after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." The mystery which had been

hid from ages and from generations, was now made manifest to his saints. "Ye shall receive power," said Jesus to his apostles, "after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.—Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I AM WITH YOU always, even unto the end of the world."

Through the presence of their heavenly Master, thus so graciously promised and vouchsafed, the success of the apostles in the propagation of the Gospel, was not to be temporary, but permanent. "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." Accordingly it has remained to this day: and continuing, as is here intimated, to be accompanied with the same irresistible influence, it shall, in spite of all opposition, "remain." The Gospel, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, shall be preached to all nations for the obedience of faith, and its triumph in the world shall be universal. The stone cut of the mountain without hands shall smite the image and break it in pieces. "Then shall the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold, be broken to pieces together, and become like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; the wind shall carry them away, and no place shall be found for them; and the stone that smote the image shall become a great mountain and shall fill the whole earth."

Other religions have been propagated by the sword, or by the power of States; but Christianity survived—

in fact, triumphed during three centuries, in spite of all opposition, without having had any extraordinary assistance, either from the power, the passions, or the talents of men. Can the history of mankind furnish any thing that, in the most distant degree, resembles this? False religions have frequently been propagated in the world, but in all instances their success may be accounted for by their adaptation to the prejudices and depraved inclinations of the human heart, and by the power and cunning of those who favoured them. But here we have a religion that condescends not to flatter those whom it addresses, a religion that is opposed to the corruptions of the heart of every individual of the human race, that refuses all fellowship with the various religions in the world, and that under these disadvantages makes its way into all nations. And when, in addition to this, we look to the instruments employed in its promulgation, nothing but the accompaniment of Almighty power can afford an adequate cause for its success. As is testified by the Apostles themselves, all has been so ordered, that *the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of man.* And thus the very method of its propagation, and the measure of its success, manifest the heavenly origin of the Christian religion, and illustrate the manifold wisdom of its Divine Author.

CHAPTER XXI.

TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION FROM THE OPPOSITION IT HAS ENCOUNTERED.

While it might have been expected that the religion of Jesus Christ, which breathes love to the human race, and never fails to produce this love in all who submit to it, would be favourably received by the world, the contrary has at all times been evinced. To whatever quarter we turn, we find the enmity it excited to be both violent and unremitting. This enmity is proved by the manner in which the testimony borne by the apostles and first Christians was generally received; by the cruel persecutions, even unto death, which they encountered; and by all the violent and persevering efforts of the Jew and the Gentile, the magistrate and the people, the learned and the unlearned, to arrest the progress of Christianity. Notwithstanding the amazing strength and variety of its proofs, no false religion, not even the most baleful, cruel, and malignant superstition, was ever opposed with such continued and persevering zeal, with such bitterness of hatred, with such insidiousness, wrath, and malice, and at such a sacrifice of time, talents, labour, and expense. How unlikely was it that the Gospel should at the same time be so virulently hated, and yet so triumphantly victorious in the world! Both

circumstances were clearly predicted, and both of them have been literally fulfilled.

What must have been the malignity, fury, and vengeance of the Jews against the doctrine of Jesus Christ, when, to crush his religion, they brought ruin on themselves, which nothing but blindness, arising from the infatuating influence of their hateful passions, could have prevented them from perceiving! Saul of Tarsus was filled with such hatred to Christianity that he devoted himself with all his powers to its destruction. And to this hour the Jews have a greater abhorrence of Jesus Christ and his doctrine, than of any of the gods and superstitions of the Heathens.

Among the opponents of the Gospel in every age, have been sages, philosophers, and men of letters, as well as the devotees of licentiousness. This might at first sight appear more injurious to the character of Christianity than to their own. It might be imagined that the religion opposed by such men could not be true. But it is necessary to reflect, that when such characters have opposed it, they have opposed it in a way in which they have opposed nothing else. They have opposed it with anger, hatred, violence, cunning, and disingenuity. While they are complaisant and civil to the grossest superstitions, they never meet Christianity but with a scowl. They cannot be civil in the shortest interview; nor, with all the polish of their manners, abstain from the rudeness of attack. The man of candour and moderation becomes a calumniator and a zealot, the man of liberality a bigot, the boasted freethinker cannot command patience to examine; and the pretender to proud virtue, stoops to the base arts of sophistry, disingenuity, and chicanery.

The rancour and unfairness with which writers, in general so candid, so accurate, so impartial, as Tacitus and Suetonius, the great Roman historians, have spoken of Christianity, is very remarkable. This fact itself is still more striking, when we consider how complaisant the professors of different heathen superstitions were to one another. These writers can hardly find language to express their abhorrence of the new system; and they scruple not to brand as a destructive superstition, and guilty of the hatred of mankind, that benign religion which breathes love to the human race. This observation is also strikingly verified in the writings of Gibbon and Hume, and other modern infidels.

The enmity of Mr Gibbon against the religion of Jesus Christ, is discovered in his very insidious and uncandid attacks. He omits no opportunity of giving it a secret stab. Yet he behaves with the utmost complaisance towards Paganism. He seems even to be greatly pleased with its gods, and speaks of "the elegant mythology of the Greeks." To depreciate the character of the early Christians, and to throw contempt on their religion, appears through the whole of his history to be his invariable object.

How great must have been the hatred of Mr Hume to the religion of the Bible, when it blinded him to such a degree, that he saw little or no difference between the religion of the Jews and that of the Egyptians—almost a perfect resemblance between two systems, one of which teaches the worship of the one Jehovah, the creator of Heaven and of Earth, and the other recognises in its worship, as gods, every kind of

beasts, birds, and reptiles!* He speaks of it as "strange that the Egyptian religion, though so *absurd*, should yet have borne so great resemblance to the Jewish, that ancient writers, even of the greatest genius, were not able to observe any difference betwixt them. "For it is very remarkable," he continues, "that both Tacitus and Suetonius, when they mention that decree of the senate under Tiberius, by which the Egyptian and Jewish proselytes were banished from Rome, expressly treat these religions as the same; and it appears that even the decree itself was founded on that supposition." "These wise heathens," he adds, "observing something in the general air, and genius, and spirit of the two religions, to be the same, esteemed the differences of their dogmas too frivolous to deserve any notice."

Here we have an example of the manner in which such writers as Mr Hume treat the subject of religion, and of the superficial, unfair, and perverse representations, by which they blind themselves, and mislead others. In the present instance, Mr Hume's statement

* It is a remarkable circumstance, that the most civilized nations among idolaters have always manifested the greatest folly in religion. Those who were called barbarians, adored the Sun and the Moon, and this was the most plausible kind of idolatry. But the Egyptians, who were first in cultivation, had an ox for their god. The Greeks, who excelled them in philosophy, ranked even human passions among their gods; and finally, the Romans deified even the infernal furies. At this day the American Indians worship the thunder, but men more civilized have adored the Devil. God has thus punished those nations which enjoyed most light, but who did not glorify him; he therefore abandoned them to the vanity of their minds, so that, professing themselves to be wise they became fools.

amounts to this, that the decree of the Roman senate to banish certain persons from Rome, *was framed solely for the object it had in view*, and did not enter into distinctions of foreign modes of worship, different from the state religion; and that Tacitus and Suetonius in their general histories, in relating this fact, *followed the same method*. Yet, with an air of gravity and surprise, he dwells on this circumstance, and represents these historians as "*not able* to observe any difference" between the Jewish and Egyptian modes of worship. And, to heighten our wonder, he adds, that they were "*wise*" men, and writers of the "*greatest genius*." If the stress is thus to be laid on the difficulty of the case, and these "wise heathens," *if they ought to have made a distinction in their narration* respecting the Jewish and Egyptian religions, yet treat them "as the same," it is "*strange*" indeed. For the Egyptian religion consisted in the observance of the grossest and most ridiculous superstitions. "You enter," says Lucian, "into a magnificent temple, every part of which glitters with gold and silver; you then look attentively for a god, and are cheated with a stork, an ape, or a cat."

Such being the nature of the Egyptian religion, it is not necessary to point out the absurdity of supposing, that wise men, after *taking pains* to examine, (for this is Mr Hume's *unfounded*, and consequently unfair representation, on which all the effect of his insinuation depends), were not able to observe any difference between the two religions. But that they really were ignorant of the Jewish religion is not strange. Why should it be thought strange that Suetonius and Tacitus were as ignorant as Mr Hume himself of a subject

they had never examined, from which their prejudices kept them at the greatest distance? The aversion of Tacitus to the Jewish nation, and his want of accuracy in many circumstances that he relates concerning them, is notorious. Speaking of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, he says, "most authors agree that a cutaneous disorder spreading through Egypt, King Bocchoris consulted the oracle of Hammon how to obtain relief. The answer was, that he should purge his kingdom, by expelling that race of men (viz., the Jews), who were so hateful to the gods." In another place he assigns an entirely different reason for the same event. "Some say that, during the reign of Isis, when the population of Egypt exceeded its resources, a multitude was poured out into the neighbouring countries, under the conduct of Hierosolymus and Judah."* In the same manner we have his testimony to some circumstances relating to Israel while in the wilderness. Of the Jewish worship he gives in one place the following account:—"The Jews believe only in one God, and worship him intellectually, considering those as profane who represent him by images, inasmuch as he is a Being supreme and eternal, immutable and unperishable; therefore there are *no images* either in their cities or in their temples." After this account, it might seem "strange" indeed that "this wise heathen" was "not able to observe any difference" between the religion of the Jews and that of the Egyptians, the latter of whom, as Mr Hume observes, were "worshippers of dogs, and adorers of cats and

* Notwithstanding these different statements, it is worthy of remark, that the fact itself of the departure of the Israelites, is mentioned by Tacitus as a thing well known to historians.

wolves." But this will not appear so strange, when we observe that, in another place, in direct contradiction to himself, he tells us, that when the Israelites were fainting with thirst in the Desert, they were relieved with water by Moses, but that a herd of wild asses led him to it; in consequence of which, *the figure of that animal was, out of gratitude, consecrated by them in their temple.*

From the above specimens, we may appreciate the force of the inference which Mr Hume would have his readers draw from the consideration, "that ancient writers, even of the greatest genius, were *not able* to observe any difference betwixt the Jewish and Egyptian religions." They may also teach the readers of Mr Hume's Essays, what stress they ought to lay on the wisdom and accuracy, either of these ancient, or of this modern writer on the subject of religion.

This malignant prejudice of Mr Hume against the religion of the Bible is rendered astonishingly striking when viewed in contrast with his complacency to heathen superstitions. It might have been expected, that if the ritual of Moses excited this philosopher's indignation, he would have become quite enraged when he began to speak of the absurd and debasing mythology of the Pagan world. But, no;—we find quite the reverse. He who labours to bring down the religion of the Bible to the rank of the grossest superstitions, finds the Pagan theology so agreeable and rational, and so *natural*, that he thinks it is more than probable that somewhere or other the system is actually carried into execution, though there is not sufficient evidence of it in this world. "If," says he, "we examine without prejudice, the ancient heathen mythology, as con-

tained in the poets, we shall not discover in it any such monstrous absurdity as we may be apt at first to apprehend. Where is the difficulty of conceiving, that the same powers or principles, whatever they were, which formed this visible world, men and animals, produced also a species of intelligent creatures, of more refined substance, and greater authority than the rest? That these creatures may be capricious, revengeful, passionate, voluptuous, is easily conceived; nor is any circumstance more apt amongst ourselves to engender such vices than the license of absolute authority. And, in short, the whole mythological system is so natural, that, in the vast variety of planets and worlds contained in this universe, it seems more than probable that somewhere or other it is really carried into execution. The chief objection to it, with regard to this planet, is, that it is not ascertained by any just reason or authority." Thus the same man, who, by philosophical speculation, pretended to have proved that there is no evidence of the existence of God, of angels, nay, of men in body or spirit, and of the world itself, gravely teaches that the existence of the voluptuous gods of Paganism "seems more than probable!"

Can a stronger proof of enmity against God, and against the religion of Jesus Christ be exhibited in any thing that ever was written, than in the above quotations from Mr Hume's writings, while the same spirit is manifest throughout the whole of them? It is impossible to attribute it to any defect in judgment or discrimination, for in these faculties he was peculiarly strong. Like the ancient philosophers, whose character the apostle Paul so forcibly describes in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, Mr Hume shows

himself on every occasion to be among the "haters of God." And of this the bitter fruits appear in his system of morals, in which, among other extraordinary sentiments, pre-eminently vicious,* he vindicates suicide and adultery. Yet, Dr Adam Smith, the author of the Theory of Moral Sentiments, declared that he had "always considered Mr Hume, both in his lifetime and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, as perhaps the nature of human frailty will admit!"

Shall we, then, be dazzled with the splendour of the talents of such men, and join in the high encomiums that have been lavished upon them? Let them have all the credit they deserve, if in political science they have made new discoveries, or recommended by their natural genius and eloquence any thing that in the result may prove beneficial to mankind. But allowing all that may be due to them in these respects, ought not their infidel sentiments to be held up to view as a solemn warning to those—especially the young—who, in perusing their writings, are in danger of being misled, and of forming a mistaken estimate of their character, to the disparagement of Divine revelation?

But enmity against the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is not peculiar to Gibbon and Hume; it has likewise been displayed by many who are considered the most eminent writers in this and foreign countries, both in ancient and modern times. Let it ever be remembered, however, that what is highly esteemed among men,

* The character of certain parts of Mr Hume's Essays was so dreadfully immoral, that after the work was first printed, some of the pages were cancelled, either in consequence of the reluctance of his publisher, or the remonstrances of his friends.

is abomination in the sight of God. And a day is coming in which the truth of the declaration of Jesus Christ will be made manifest, that publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before many who stand high in the opinion of the world; and when on the same principle it will be found, that they who have laboured most conspicuously in the cause of infidelity, will, in point of moral guilt and criminality, be ranked below the most degraded and most profligate of the human race. The apostle Paul pronounced a solemn verdict on himself, when, in reference to his conduct in opposing the claims of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, he affirmed that he was "*the chief of sinners.*" He thus placed himself below the thief on the cross, and he speaks of his guilt as so aggravated, that "for this cause," he says, "I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." It has been justly remarked, that the evidences of the truth of Christianity are so full and clear, that they cannot be rejected without great wickedness of heart.

But what is it in Christianity that provokes the enmity of the world? Why are the savage and the sage alike enemies to the religion of Jesus Christ? The reason of the hatred of the religion of the Bible, in all ages, especially of the wise men of the world, is the character which it gives of God and of man. At first sight it may appear paradoxical, that such persons should be represented as hostile to the scripture character of God, seeing it is such as ought to recommend itself to them, and that many of them have actually written treatises on the attributes of God, and in de-

fence of Christianity. What can be conceived more glorious than Almighty power, infinite wisdom, and goodness? What more consoling than mercy? Who has ever quarrelled with these attributes? Do not the systems of natural religion, which are the productions of such men, embrace even the attributes of truth, holiness, and justice? It is very true that they may in words deny none of them, and, on the contrary, be well pleased with many of the Divine attributes. Their systems mention them all by name. But it is equally true, that some of these attributes are held by them merely in name, and that while they say that God is just and holy, they conceive of these perfections as limited. The infinite justice and holiness of God they altogether discard. When they explain justice as a divine attribute, it is an entirely different thing from the proper signification of the word, and is considered as merely a modification of goodness or mercy. It is never permitted to claim full reparation. A God so holy and just, that no transgression of his law in the least degree can be overlooked by him, but must separate for ever from his presence, and condemn to eternal misery, except through an atonement made by an Almighty Saviour, instead of being an object of the love of the wisdom of this world, is an object of unmingled hatred. Had the Scripture represented God as infinite in prescience, power, and knowledge, and, at the same time, so merciful, that no creature would be punished by him, but that eventually all men, and all fallen angels, should be restored to happiness, there is no doubt that they who are now most hostile to the Gospel, would be the loudest in its praise. Accordingly, we find that those who have not

courage to reject Christianity in name, represent it in this very dress, or at least modify it in such a way as to make it suitable to their own taste. Those who are more hardened in their conscience, or bolder, free themselves of what is disagreeable to them in it, by denying it altogether.

Had the God of the Bible been represented in the character in which he is exhibited in the writings of many who profess Christianity, he never would have been an object of hatred to Mr Hume, who would not in that case have attempted to degrade the religion of the Jews to a level with the superstitions of the Egyptians; nor have praised the mythology of paganism to the disparagement of Christianity. His understanding would then have had ample scope for profound speculations regarding the Divine attributes that do not bear against the sinner, and his imagination might have been gratified with the most sublime contemplations, without endangering the intrusion of any check of conscience for the guilt of breaking the divine law. But when these attributes are exhibited in combination with others that represent God as the enemy of transgressors, they only excite abhorrence in all who reject the atonement. Almighty power and omniscience would be admirable subjects for philosophical speculation, but when they are considered as the attributes of an enemy, there is a greater desire to disbelieve their existence than to admire them. These considerations furnish a key to what is otherwise inexplicable, and show that it is altogether natural for such men as Gibbon and Hume to prefer the society of the gods of paganism, to that of the Holy, the Just, the Almighty, the Omniscient, Lord God of the Bible.

The one is an object of dread, the others will be companions in all the immoralities and crimes to which men are addicted, and the practice of some of the worst of which Mr Hume's system of morals not only tolerates but recommends. While the gods of Greece and Rome will be the patrons of the votaries of all kinds of vice, they will be the most gentle and forbearing neighbours to the philosophers.

That it is the character of God manifested in Jesus Christ that is the object of offence to the world, we learn from our blessed Lord himself. "But now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father," John, xv. 24. The Jews professed to love the Father, and claimed him as their God; but by hating Jesus Christ, who exhibited all the divine attributes, they showed that they hated the Father also. The same thing is evident from the joy manifested at the slaying of the witnesses in the book of Revelation, and the reason assigned for that joy. Rev. xi. 10. "And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth." Here is the true reason of the hatred of the word of God; it torments those who do not obey it. "The world cannot hate you," said Jesus Christ to the Jews; "but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil."

The character which the Scriptures give of man is not more agreeable to him than that which they give of God. They represent him as ruined by the transgression of his first parent, and as utterly depraved by nature. They declare that no man liveth and sinneth not, and consequently that every man is exposed to

eternal misery, except Divine interposition saves him. How very distasteful this is to the human mind, we may see from the way in which it was received from Jesus Christ himself, by the Scribes and Pharisees. They could not at all submit to this humbling doctrine. And that it is equally unpalatable to the wisdom of this world to this day, may be learned from the speculations of philosophers with regard to man. Some of them do not regard man even as a fallen being, and almost all of them represent him as so little injured by the fall of Adam, that he is quite equal of himself to the task of working out his own salvation, and fit to live so as to come before God with large claims upon his justice. If their man of virtue is subject to evils in this world, philosophy, instead of arguing his guilt from this fact, endeavours to found on it his hope for a future existence. As virtue is not rewarded here, there must be an after state in which it is rewarded. How many excellencies of character are possessed by the virtuous man of philosophic speculation! How very different does man appear in the writings of moralists from the representation given of him in the Scriptures! Let any one read a few pages of the systems of moral science with respect to the moral worth of man, and after this read the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans, or open the Bible at random, and he will be struck with their irreconcilable difference. After this he will be at no loss to account for the enmity to the Bible, not only of Hume, Gibbon, and the whole race of avowed infidels, but also of philosophers in general, who, professing Christianity, teach substantial unbelief of revelation.

How unpalatable is the view given of human nature

in Scripture, is also seen in the various classes of society, as well as in the writings of the learned. How many preachers coincide with the unbelieving philosopher! How many preach nothing that in any sense can be called gospel, some maintaining doctrines directly opposed to it, and others holding forth only the duty of practising a scanty morality, and so preach neither law nor gospel! How many of them teach, that, however man may have been injured by the fall, he is not so injured but that he has as much of a remainder of what is good, as, if duly improved, will enable him to save himself! Many even of those preachers who know the truth, shun to declare the whole counsel of God, keeping certain doctrines, of the truth of which they are convinced, out of sight, fearing to give offence to their hearers. From all this, the natural aversion of the human heart to the representation given in the Bible of the state and character of man, is abundantly manifest, while the truth of the apostolic declaration is fully vindicated, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him."

As the religion of the Bible, then, has in every age and in every country, been hated by the wise of this world, although it possesses many characteristics that, abstractedly considered, human wisdom would admire, and as it is unacceptable to all classes of society, without some disguise, though in itself the most excellent system, in doctrine, example, and precept, that ever was presented to men, so it is clear that it could not have been the offspring of the human mind. Granting, for a moment, what is utterly impossible, that the genius of man could have invented such a system,

would it produce what is the object of its own aversion? Would the mental powers of men—capable of such sublimity of thought, such knowledge of the heart, and such an amazing depth of wisdom—have given certain characteristics to their work, which renders the whole an object of disgust? Human wisdom is now so much aware that some features, both of the divine and human character, as exhibited in the Scriptures, are disagreeable to the world, that it invariably, in its representations, alters them, hides them, or modifies them, so as to make the picture agreeable. If so, how could it be accounted for, that human wisdom should have created those features, had the Scriptures been the work of human genius? The supposition that the Bible is a forgery, involves one of the greatest absurdities. It ascribes to human genius what is evidently above the faculties of man, and, at the same time, charges on it such weakness, as every false preacher, pretending to take his system from the Bible, can avoid. If the forgers of the Bible were capable of producing such sublimity in many parts of their system, as to leave all the wisdom displayed by the sages of Greece and Rome far behind them, how is it that they were so weak as to represent God and human nature in characters that never pleased any natural man, and that must have, most of all, displeased themselves? Here would be an incongruous mixture of wisdom and weakness that never could have been exemplified in the same persons.

As, from the very commencement of Christianity to the present moment, it has been assailed by a succession of the ablestand most determined enemies, its continued existence is irrefragable evidence of its truth.

The walls of Zion have been violently assailed, for upwards of seventeen centuries, by the most formidable adversaries, and the most powerful artillery, that earth and hell ever brought into the field, yet no breach has been effected, and no weak point has been discovered. How admirable is the wisdom of God! Human wisdom is apt to lament the enmity against Christianity displayed by men of the greatest genius. It thinks it a misfortune that such talents were conferred on those men, and that it would have been better had they been feeble and powerless. But, in conferring on the enemies of his word extraordinary powers, God has displayed, in the most conspicuous manner, the impregnable strength of Christianity. To demonstrate the solidity of the towers of Zion, Divine wisdom has prepared a host of the bitterest of his enemies to assail them with all the advantages of skill and genius. They have exerted all that ingenuity, malice, and subtlety, which they naturally possessed, or that Satan could suggest; and yet, in so long a period, they have not made the slightest impression. When infidels boast of the learning, genius, and talents of the enemies of Christianity, the Christian may grant all, and gain by the concession. The cause which has withstood the successive efforts of enemies so determined, so rancorous, so powerful, must be the cause of God.

The testimony to the truth of the Gospel from the opposition of the world to the doctrine of Christ, is peculiarly strong. But in order fully to estimate it force, it is necessary to keep in mind the express intimations, and the many examples of it afforded in every part of the Bible. In the first sentence pronounced by God after the fall, the enmity between those who are called

the seed of the serpent—the children of the devil, John viii. 44, and the seed of the woman—Jesus Christ and his people—is proclaimed, and the whole human race is divided into two great classes. It is exemplified in the first man who was born into the world, who slew his brother; and wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous: thus furnishing a clear and satisfactory account of the matter. Mankind are in a state of guilt, apostacy, and corruption; their minds are enmity itself against God. His holy nature, that is himself, is the object of their aversion. The doctrines of grace, of faith, of justification, of holiness, of this world and the next, which Christianity reveals, are diametrically opposite to all that any other religion devised, or any philosophy invented. The world will bear, and even in some circumstances admire, certain forms and shadows of goodness. Real goodness itself, all that are of the world will hate, will persecute with unremitted rancour. For other animosities, time and other lenient circumstances will administer a cure. Godliness must be hated by the world for ever. Satan, its god, will ever aid his subjects in the prosecution of the quarrel, and no man can escape the infection except he become a new creature. Even the virtues of the world are fully as hostile to the Gospel as its grossest vices; for, as it has been justly observed, it condemns all the glory as well as all the shame of the world.

A striking instance of this enmity of the world to God, is recorded in the daring rebellion against his government, of which the Canaanites were guilty, and by which they filled up their measure of iniquity. They were aware of the grant of their land, by Jehovah

himself, to the nation of Israel, and of his determination to put them in possession of it; and they had heard of the signal vengeance he had inflicted on the Egyptians for opposing their departure, and of the stupendous miracles he had wrought in their journeyings towards their promised inheritance. "I know," said Rahab (Joshua, i. 9, 10), "that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed." Notwithstanding this, we soon after read, that upon the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan, "when all the kings that were on this side Jordan, in the hills and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof, that they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord," Joshua, ix. 1, 2. Yet, the wo pronounced upon him that striveth with his Maker has been incurred by men in modern times, who, arraigning the justice of God in this transaction, and charging with cruelty the command to extirpate the nations of Canaan, given to the Israelites, and their execution of that command, have made themselves partakers with the Canaanites in their rebellion. Many, too, are daily to be met with, who, by approving of the profane ridicule of these writers, do not hesitate to identify themselves with them in the crime.

The same enmity is exemplified in the hatred of the other Pagan nations of antiquity against the Jews, who

alone worshipped the only true God, and in their endeavours, as related by Ezra and Nehemiah, to prevent them from rebuilding what they called "the rebellious and the bad city." It was manifested all along among the Jews themselves, in the manner in which in every age they treated the men of God who appeared among them, as we learn from the whole of their history, and from the Epistle to the Hebrews, and likewise from the way in which they persecuted the apostles and first Christians. But above all, this enmity was fully displayed in the sufferings and death of the Son of God.

It was affirmed by one of the ancient philosophers, that if virtue were to descend upon earth in a bodily shape, all men would fall down and worship it. In Jesus Christ this was realized, but how different was the result! Yet how entirely did his reception correspond with the predictions of all the prophets!

The enmity and opposition of the world to the Lord Jesus Christ and his followers has, according to his often-repeated warnings on the subject, been experienced by the latter in every period since he appeared. "Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."—"Marvel not, my brethren," says the apostle John, "if the world hate you." The apostle Paul affirms, that "All they that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" and this annunciation entirely corresponds with what he has also declared, that "the carnal mind is enmity against God." The truth of these declarations has been verified in all ages and countries by the most relentless persecutions, violence, and bloodshed; and where these, owing to the restraints of improved civil governments,

are not permitted, by opposition, ridicule, contempt, and discord in private families, and variances among the nearest relations. Yet it is very remarkable, that while this fact is universally verified, and while all Christians are aware of it, and experience it more or less according to the situation in which they are placed, those who are of the world cannot possibly be persuaded of its existence. On the contrary, they uniformly refer what is declared in the Bible respecting opposition to the Gospel, not to the natural enmity of the mind of man against God and his religion, but to something peculiar in the age or circumstances in which it makes its appearance, or in the character of those who are objects of it. So general, indeed, is the sentiment that the religion of Christ has a tendency to procure love to its votaries, that in many books of sermons, written by men who are ignorant of the Gospel, it is represented among the encouragements to a Christian life, that it will recommend those who exemplify it to the esteem and approbation of their fellow-men.

CHAPTER XXII.

TESTIMONY TO THE MESSIAH FROM THE PROPHECIES THAT ARE AT PRESENT FULFILLING IN THE WORLD.

Besides the Prophecies immediately respecting the Messiah, and the introduction of the Christian dispensation, there are others that refer to remarkable events

in the history of the world which are fulfilling at this day. Of these the most considerable are the prophecy of Noah regarding Canaan; that of Ishmael and his descendants; and the predictions respecting Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, and Egypt, and above all, the nation of Israel. In the visions of Daniel and the apostle John, we have a prophetical abstract of the most signal events that were to take place through all ages; and their accomplishment hitherto has been uniformly exact. All of these prophecies possess a very remarkable degree of clearness, and are constantly presenting additional evidence. Their fulfilment is testified by the voice of history, and presents itself as a standing miracle. All of them furnish decisive testimony to the truth of Divine revelation, and constantly remind us, that known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

NOAH'S PROPHECY.*

We have already considered the prophecy of Noah, as it refers to the Messiah; we shall now observe that part of it which relates to the sentence pronounced upon Canaan. On account of the sin of which Ham his second son had been guilty, Noah, not in order to gratify any feeling of resentment, but under a divine impulse, as the fulfilment of the prophecy clearly proves, delivered the following prediction, which denounced a curse upon Canaan, one of the sons of Ham, and a blessing upon Shem and Japheth.

"And he said,

* See Newton on the Prophecies respecting Canaan, Ishmael, Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, and the Jews.

"Cursed be Canaan;
"A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.
"And he said,
"Blessed be Jehovah, God of Shem;
"And Canaan shall be their servant.
"God shall enlarge Japheth;
"And shall dwell in the tents of Shem;
"And Canaan shall be their servant."

Although the above curse was not pronounced on Ham, who had been personally the transgressor, yet it was a heavy chastisement on him to hear of the evil that was to fall on his posterity. In this part of the punishment, Noah also, in consequence of his own sinful conduct, was himself in a measure involved, being employed to pronounce this malediction on a large portion of his own descendants.

The curse was directed particularly against the line of Canaan, which must have tended greatly to encourage the Israelites, the descendants of Shem, when sent to take possession of that land which was inhabited by the posterity of Canaan; of whom those that were not destroyed, were brought into bondage, like the Gibeonites, who became hewers of wood and drawers of water. At the same time, this punishment was to be inflicted in perfect conformity with justice. The descendants of Canaan were to suffer for their own sins, by which they identified themselves with their guilty progenitor. The Israelites were not permitted to go against them till their "iniquity was full," and till, on account of their wickedness, the land, in the emphatic language of Scripture, "spewed them out." The posterity of Canaan in Tyre and Carthage, were subdued by the descendants of Japheth.

The accomplishment of this prophecy does not appear to have been limited to the line of Canaan, but to have extended to the other children of Ham. The whole continent of Africa was peopled principally by the children of Ham, and for many ages the better parts of that country lay under the dominion of the Romans, then of the Saracens, and lastly of the Turks. Egypt is often called in Scripture the land of Ham, and for many years it was a great and flourishing kingdom. But it was subdued by the Persians, the descendants of Shem, and afterwards by the Grecians, the descendants of Japheth, and from that time to this it has been constantly in subjection to the posterity of Shem or Japheth. The inhabitants of Africa have been bought and sold for slaves from the earliest periods of history, even to the present day. Thus, in the above words of Noah, we have a remarkable prediction, uttered at the distance of above 4000 years, which has been in the course of literal fulfilment from that time to the present hour.

ISHMAEL.

Another remarkable prophecy is that concerning Ishmael and his descendants. When Hagar, the servant of Abraham, fled from the face of her mistress, "The angel of the Lord found her in the wilderness, and said unto her, Return unto thy mistress and submit thyself unto her hands. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shall call his name Ishmael, because

the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man: his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."—"Behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation." All these prophecies respecting the posterity of Ishmael have been remarkably verified. Strabo frequently mentions the Arabian Phylarchs, or rulers of tribes: and Melo, quoted by Eusebius, from Alexander Polyhistor, a heathen historian, relates, that twelve sons of Abraham departing into Arabia, divided the region between them, and were the first kings of the inhabitants; "whence," says he, "even to our days, the Arabians have twelve kings of the same names as the first." Ever since, the people have been governed by Phylarchs, and have lived in tribes.

And "I will make him a great nation." This is again and again repeated. The Saracens, his descendants, made rapid and extensive conquests, and erected one of the largest empires that ever existed in the world. "And he will be a wild man." It is said of Ishmael, Genesis xxi. 20, "That he dwelt in the wilderness;" and his sons still inhabit the same wilderness, and many of them neither sow nor plant. "And he became an archer." Such the Arabs have been, and continue to this day. "His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him." Ishmael lived by spoil and rapine in the wilderness; and his posterity have all along infested Arabia and the neighbouring countries with their robberies and incursions. They live in a state of continual war with the rest of the world, and are both robbers by land and

pirates by sea. They have been enemies to mankind and the rest of mankind have been enemies to them, and several unsuccessful attempts have been made for their extirpation. Even now, as well as formerly, travellers are forced to go armed and in caravans, or large companies, and to keep watch, and to defend themselves from their assaults, as they go about in troops, and rob and plunder all whom they can by any means subdue. These robberies they also justify, by alleging the hard usage of their father Ishmael, who being turned out of doors by Abraham, had the open plains and deserts given him by God for his patrimony, with permission to take whatever he could find there. And, on this account, they think they may justly indemnify themselves as well as they can, not only on the posterity of Isaac, but on all besides.

"And he shall dwell" (tabernacle, or dwell in tents) "in the presence of all his brethren." It appears that they dwelt in tents in the wilderness, so long ago as in the time of Isaiah and Jeremiah; and they do so at this day. Their hand is against every man, and every man's hand against them; and yet they are able to dwell in the presence of all their brethren. This has been fulfilled both in the person of Ishmael and in his posterity. As for Ishmael himself, the sacred historian afterwards relates (Gen. xxv. 17, 18), that "the years of the life of Ishmael were an hundred and thirty and seven years, and he died in the presence of all his brethren." His posterity dwelt likewise in the presence of all their brethren; Abraham's sons by Keturah; the Moabites and Ammonites, descendants of Lot; the Israelites, descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and the Edomites, descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Esau. And they still subsist a dis

tinct people, and inhabit the country of their progenitors, notwithstanding the perpetual enmity between them and the rest of mankind. They have, from first to last, maintained their independence; and, notwithstanding the most powerful efforts for their destruction, they still dwell in the presence of all their brethren.

They were never subjected by their powerful neighbours the Egyptians or Assyrians, nor by Cyrus and the Persians, the next great conquerors of the East. Neither he nor his successors ever reduced the whole body of the Arabs to subjection. They conquered some of the exterior, but never reached the interior parts of the country. Herodotus, who lived nearest to these times, says expressly, that the Arabs were never reduced by the Persians to the condition of subjects, but were considered by them as friends, and opened to them a passage into Egypt, which, without the assistance and permission of the Arabs, would have been utterly impracticable. In another place he says, that while Phœnicia, Palestine, Syria, and the neighbouring countries, were taxed, the Arabian territories continued free from tribute.

Alexander the Great then overturned the Persian empire, and conquered Asia. He was preparing an expedition against the Arabs, when an inflammatory fever cut him off in the flower of his age. The successors of this renowned conqueror attempted to subdue them, but failed. Diodorus says, that "neither the Assyrians formerly, nor the kings of the Medes and Persians, nor yet of the Macedonians, were able to subdue them; nay, though they led many and great forces against them, yet they could not accomplish their attempts."

The Romans then invaded the East, and subdued the adjoining countries, but were never able to reduce Arabia into the form of a Roman province. Pompey, though he triumphed over three parts of the world, could not conquer Arabia. Elius Gallus, in the reign of Augustus, penetrated far into the country, but at last escaped with a small remainder of his forces. Trajan reduced some parts of Arabia, but could never conquer it entirely. When he besieged the city of the Hagarenes, he was constantly repulsed, and at length was forced to raise the siege, and retired with disgrace into his own dominions. About eighty years afterwards, the Emperor Severus twice besieged the same city, with a numerous army, and a train of military engines; but neither he nor any of the following emperors had any better success than Trajan. The Arabs continued their incursions and depredations in Syria, and other Roman provinces, with equal license and impunity.

Such was the state and condition of the Arabs down to the time of Mahomet, who laid the foundations of a mighty empire; and then, for several centuries, they were better known among the European nations by the name of Saracens,—the Araceni of Pliny, and the Hagarenes, or children of Hagar, of Scripture.* Their conquests were rapid in the extreme. In a few years the Saracens overran more countries, and subdued more people, than the Romans did in several centuries. They were then not only independent themselves, but masters of the most considerable parts of the world. After their empire was dissolved, and they were re-

* The Mahometan Arabs called themselves *Sara*-cens, instead of *Hagar*-enes, to wipe off the reproach of their birth.

duced within the limits of their native country, they still maintained their liberty against the Tartars, Mamalucs, Turks, and all foreign enemies whatever. Whoever conquered Asia, they were still unconquered, and still continued their incursions, and preyed on all. The Turks have now, for several centuries, been masters of the adjacent countries ; but they have been so little able to restrain the depredations of the Arabs, that they have been obliged to pay them a sort of annual tribute.

Thus has this single nation withstood the enmity of all others, and been for near 4000 years, in the words of Gibbon, " armed against the world." The great empires around them have in their turns all fallen to ruin, while the children of Ishmael have continued the same from their origin. This, in the common course of human affairs, was in the highest degree improbable. These are the only people, besides the Jews, who have subsisted as a distinct nation from the beginning. They, as well as the Jews, boast of their descent from Abraham, from whom also they profess to have derived circumcision. And thus, in the language of a modern traveller, they verify the prediction given of Ishmael at his birth, that he and his posterity should be a wild man, and always continue to be so, though they shall dwell for ever in the presence of their brethren. That an acute and active people, surrounded for ages by polished and luxurious nations, should, from their earliest to their latest times, be still found a wild people, dwelling in the presence of all their brethren, unsubdued and unchanged, is indeed a standing miracle—one of those mysterious facts which establish the truth of prophecy.

The next four prophecies relate to what were once the chief cities and the most civilized kingdom in the world. These prophecies expressly foretell the greatness of the change they were to experience, as well as its duration. At the present day, we witness their exact accomplishment.

NINEVEH.

NINEVEH, or Ninus, as it was usually called by the Greeks and Romans, was a very ancient city, and the metropolis of the Assyrian empire. Diodorus Siculus affirms, that "its builder, Ninus, proposed to build a city of such magnitude, that it should not only be the greatest of the cities which were then in all the world, but that none of those who should be born after that time, attempting the like, should easily exceed it." And a little after he subjoins, that "nobody afterwards built such a city, either as to the greatness of the compass, or as to the magnificence of the walls." It is said by Jonah (iii. 3), that it was "an exceeding great city of three days' journey;" that is, of three days' journey in circuit; and that in it "there were more than six score thousand persons who could not discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle;" so that, according to the usual calculation from the number of children, the inhabitants amounted to above six hundred thousand.

The prophet Nahum predicted the entire destruction of this city. And Josephus says, that all that Nahum foretold concerning Nineveh came to pass 115 years afterwards. Nahum not only prophesied that Nineveh should be destroyed, but also the manner of its destruc-

tion. "For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they be drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble full dry." He also foretells, that "the gates of the river shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved." Diodorus relates the exact accomplishment of both these prophecies.

Nahum likewise foretold the total and entire destruction of this city. "The Lord, with an overrunning flood, will make an utter end of the place thereof; he will make an utter end; affliction shall not rise up the second time." Again, "Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions," meaning Nineveh, where princes ravaged like lions? "behold I am against thee, saith the Lord of Hosts; and I will cut off the prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers will no more be heard." And again, "Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshopers, which camp in the hedges, in the cold day; but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are," or have been. "Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; thy nobles shall dwell in the dust; thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them; there is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous; all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?"

The prophet Zephaniah, in the days of Josiah king of Judah, likewise foretold the same event: "The Lord will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria, and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness: and flocks shall lie down in

the midst of her, all the beasts of the nation, both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds, for he shall uncover the cedar work. This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly; that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me; how is she become a desolation,—a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss and wag his hand." Accordingly, Lucian, in the second century after Christ, affirms that Nineveh was utterly destroyed, and that there were no traces of it remaining, nor could the traveller discern where once it was situated. The greater regard is to be paid to Lucian's testimony as he was a native of Samosata, a city upon the Euphrates. Thus, even the ruins of Nineveh have been destroyed. Such an utter end hath been made of it, and such is the truth of the Divine predictions.

BABYLON.

NINEVEH and BABYLON were both enemies to the people of God. The one subverted the kingdom of Israel, and the other the kingdom of Judah. There are therefore several prophecies relating to both; and the fall of Babylon is foretold, as well as that of Nineveh. Jeremiah says, "Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away; first the king of Assyria hath devoured him, and last this Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, hath broken his bones: Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Behold I will punish the king of Babylon and his land as I have punished the king of Assyria." Babylon, like Nineveh,

was a very ancient city, and became so great that it gave name to a mighty empire. It is called in Scripture, "Great Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees, excellency."

Cyrus, who was the conqueror of Babylon, and transferred the empire from the Babylonians to the Medes and Persians, was particularly foretold, by name, by the Prophet Isaiah, xlv. 1, above an hundred years before he was born. "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayst know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee though thou hast not known me."

There are several prophecies concerning Babylon, which were minutely fulfilled, such as the enemies that should be brought against it, and the particular manner in which it should be taken, during a feast, by the drying up of the river. The exact accomplishment of these are particularly attested by heathen historians. The Prophet Isaiah, who uttered several of these predictions, lived above 250 years before Herodotus, and nearly 350 before Xenophon, who relate their accomplishment.

The prophets also foretold that Babylon should be

reduced to desolation. "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in, from generation to generation. Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their folds there; but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there: And the wild beasts of the island shall cry in their desolate houses, and the dragons in their pleasant places; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."—"I will rise up against thee, saith the Lord of Hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, and son and nephew," (or grandson), "saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Jeremiah, speaking much in the same strain, says, "Because of the wrath of the Lord it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate; every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues: How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! Therefore the wild beasts of the desert, with the wild beasts of the islands, shall dwell there; and the owls shall dwell therein, and it shall be no more inhabited for ever, neither shall it be dwelt in, from generation to generation. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord, so no man shall abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell there-

in."—"O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness: And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the Lord: And the land shall tremble and sorrow; for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation, without an inhabitant. And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant. The sea is come up upon Babylon, she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness; a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby."

These awful predictions were literally accomplished. Babylon was gradually brought down, till it was reduced to ruin. Pausanias, who lived about the middle of the second century, says, "that of Babylon, the greatest city that the sun ever saw, there is nothing now remaining but the walls." In the time of the Emperor Theodosius, there was only a great park remaining, in which the kings of Persia kept wild beasts for the amusement of hunting. By these accounts, we see how punctually the predictions of the prophets concerning Babylon have been fulfilled. When it was converted into a chase for wild beasts, to feed and breed there, then were exactly accomplished the words of the prophets, that—"The wild beasts of the desert, with the wild beasts of the islands, should dwell there, and cry in their desolate houses." One part of the country was overflowed by the river's having been turned out of its course, and never restored again to

its former channel, and thence became marshy; so that it might literally be said to be "a possession for the bittern, and pools of water." Another part is described as dry and naked, and barren of every thing; so that thereby was also fulfilled another prophecy, which seemed, in some measure, to contradict the former. "Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby." The place thereabout is represented as overrun with serpents, scorpions, and all sorts of venomous and unclean creatures, so that "their houses are full of doleful creatures, and dragons cry in their pleasant palaces; and Babylon is become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant." For all these reasons, "*neither can the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither can the shepherds make their folds there.*" Thus has Babylon "*become a desolation among the nations.*" Every purpose of the Lord hath he performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon "*a desolation without an inhabitant.*" And, "*the Lord hath swept it with the besom of destruction.*"

TYRE.

THE city of Tyre, like Babylon, was an enemy to the Jews; and to this hour it remains another monument of the truth of prophecy. Isaiah describes it as "a mart of nations, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth." It was in this wealthy and flourishing condition, when the prophets foretold its destruction. The

prophets denounced the Divine judgment upon the Tyrians, for their pride and wickedness in general, and, in particular, for their cruelty to the people of Israel. "Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things: the children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border: Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and I will return your recompense upon your own head."

Various particulars, as to the manner of the destruction of Tyre, were also predicted, in a number of separate prophecies, and fully verified by the event. Her final ruin is foretold in these words:—Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up: And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers. I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God."

The prophet repeats it, to show its certainty. "I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon: thou shalt *be built no more;* for I, the Lord have spoken it, saith the Lord God." And again, "I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more; though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God."—"Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth? The Lord of Hosts

hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth." —"Thus saith the Lord God, O Tyrus, thou hast said I am of perfect beauty; thy borders are in the midst of the seas; thy builders have perfected thy beauty: By thy great wisdom, and by thy traffick, hast thou increased thy riches, and thy heart is lifted up because of thy riches. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore will I cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness; thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities; by the iniquity of thy traffick, therefore, will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more."

Tyre, accordingly, has long ago been destroyed, and every traveller to that part of the world bears witness to the literal fulfilment of the above predictions in its present appearance. Dr Shaw says, "I visited several creeks and inlets, in order to discover what provision there might have been formerly made for the security of their vessels. Yet notwithstanding that Tyre was the chief maritime power of this country, I could not observe the least token of either *cothon* or harbour that could have been of any extraordinary capacity."—"Even this port, small as it is at present, is notwithstanding so choked up with sand and rubbish, that the

boats of those poor fishermen who now and then visit this once renowned emporium, can with great difficulty be admitted." Parvillerius, who resided ten years in Syria, said, that when he approached the ruins of Tyre, and beheld the rocks stretched forth to the sea, and the great stones scattered up and down on the shore, made clean and smooth by the sun, and waves, and winds, and useful only for drying fishermen's nets, many of which happened at that time to be spread thereon, it brought to his memory the prophecy of Ezekiel."

"This city," says Maundrel, "standing in the sea upon a peninsula, promises, at a distance, something very magnificent. But when you come to it, you find no similitude of that glory for which it was so renowned in ancient times, and which the prophet Ezekiel describes. On the north side, it has an old Turkish ungarrisoned castle, besides which you see nothing here but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, &c., there being not so much as one entire house left; its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly upon fishing, who seem to be preserved in this place by Divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, viz., 'that it should be as a top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry their nets on.'" Such has been the fate of this city, once the most famous in the world for trade and commerce.

EGYPT.

EGYPT is one of the first and most renowned countries that we read of in history. It is called in Scrip-

ture Mizraim, and the land of Ham, having been first inhabited after the deluge by Noah's youngest son Ham or Hammon, and by his son Mizraim. Egypt was also celebrated for its wisdom, and to it the philosophers of Greece repaired to imbibe learning as at its fountain. The revolutions of this kingdom, and its state down to the present day, were foretold by the prophets.

The conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar is thus predicted by Ezekiel:—"Thus saith the Lord God, I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon: He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land, and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain." Ezekiel also foretold that this country should be desolated forty years, and the people dispersed into other countries. "I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities, among the cities that are laid waste, shall be desolate forty years, and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries."

Berosus says, "that Nebuchadnezzar took several captives in Egypt, and carried them to Babylon." And from Megasthenes we learn, that he transplanted and settled others in Pontus.

There are several other predictions concerning the different changes that took place in Egypt; and Ezekiel has foretold the state into which it was at last to fall, and in which it has remained *to this day*. Ezekiel was commanded to set his face against Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and to prophecy against him, and against all Egypt. After denouncing woes upon them

the prophet says, "And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break and rend all their shoulder, and when they leaned upon thee, thou breakedst and madest all their loins to be at a stand."—"I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation, and they shall be there *a base kingdom.* It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them that they shall no more rule over the nations."—"I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked; and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers; I the Lord have spoken it. Thus saith the Lord God, I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph, and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt." Ezekiel's prediction is fully attested by the whole series of the history of Egypt, from that time to the present.

It is now much more than two thousand years since this prophecy was first delivered; and what likelihood or appearance was there that Egypt, so great a kingdom, so rich and fertile a country, should for so many ages bow under a foreign yoke, and never afterwards be able to recover its liberties, or be ruled by a native prince? But as is the prophecy, so is the event. For not long afterwards, Egypt was conquered by the Babylonians, and after the Babylonians by the Persians, and after the Persians it became subject to the Macedonians, and after the Macedonians to the Romans,

and after the Romans to the Saracens, and then to the Mamalucs, and is now a province of the Othman empire.

Thus Egypt, once so renowned, and the first of kingdoms, has been a base kingdom; and Ham, in his posterity, has been a servant of servants unto his brethren. The people of Egypt are described by travellers as exceedingly wicked and treacherous, and so very greedy and cruel, that they will murder a man for the smallest reward.

We see, then, how Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, and Egypt, the great adversaries and oppressors of the Jews, have been visited by Divine vengeance, both for their idolatry, pride, and wickedness, and for their enmity and cruelty to the people of God.

THE JEWS.

THE kingdom of Israel was separated from all other nations, in order that, through it, the kingdom of heaven, which was to be universal, might be introduced. In consequence of this separation, the Jews enjoyed singular privileges; but, as they abused these privileges, their punishment has been as signal as their exaltation. Throughout the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, from the time when they were separated as a nation, there is a remarkable series of prophecies concerning them, to which an important addition was afterwards made by Jesus Christ himself. To some of these prophecies we shall now advert, especially such as were delivered by Moses.

In the 30th chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses says to Israel, "If thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not

hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them ; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it." In the 28th chapter of the same book, a full detail is given of the calamities that would overtake them if they should be disobedient. These predictions were all fulfilled, though not at once. Different enemies were brought against them, and they sustained several sieges, all pointed out in various predictions, which were ultimately and fully accomplished in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and in their final and grand dispersion, when " wrath came upon them to the uttermost."

We find it foretold, that an enemy was to be brought against them for their punishment. Deut. xxviii. 49, " The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the *eagle* flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand." Again, " Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord. It is a mighty nation ; it is an ancient nation ; a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say." —" A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young."—" And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land." Thus the Romans were brought against them, whose significant standard was an EAGLE.

In the siege, they were to suffer much, especially from famine. The man's " eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward

his children; because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates;" and, in like manner, the woman's "eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter."

It was expressly foretold, that not only the men, but even the women, should eat their own children. "Ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat."—"And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters." And more particularly, "The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness,—she shall eat her children, for want of all things, secretly, in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in thy gates." This was fulfilled about six hundred years after the time of Moses among the Israelites, when Samaria was besieged by the king of Syria, and two women agreed together, the one to give up her son to be sodden and eaten to-day, and the other to deliver up her son to be devoured on the morrow: and one of them was eaten accordingly. It was fulfilled again, about nine hundred years after the time of Moses among the Jews, in the siege of Jerusalem, before the Babylonish captivity. Jeremiah bewails this in his Lamentations: "The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children; they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people." And again it was fulfilled, above fifteen hundred years after the time of Moses, in the last siege of Jerusalem by Titus. And we read in Josephus, particularly, of a noblewoman,

illustrious for her family and riches, killing and eating her own sucking child. Thus exactly were fulfilled the words of Moses, concerning "the tender and delicate woman, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness."

Great numbers of the Jews were to be destroyed. "And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude." Josephus computes, that, during the whole siege, the number of those who were destroyed then and by the war, amounted to eleven hundred thousand, the people being assembled from all parts to celebrate the passover. They were to be carried into Egypt, and sold for a very low price. "And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you." This was literally fulfilled. The markets were quite overstocked with them; and Josephus says, they were sold with their wives and children at the lowest price. They were to be rooted out of their own land. "And ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it."

They were also to be dispersed into all nations. "And thou shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.—The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other." —"I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you, and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste." All this has been literally fulfilled.

They should suffer much in their dispersion. "And among those nations shalt thou find no ease, neither

shall the sole of thy foot have rest." They have been banished from city to city, from country to country. In many places they have been banished, and recalled, and banished again. In the latter end of the 13th century, they were banished from England: in the latter end of the 14th century, they were banished from France for the seventh time: in the latter end of the 15th century, they were banished from Spain. Most of them paid dearly for a refuge in Portugal; but, within a few years, they were also expelled from that country.

They should be "oppressed and spoiled evermore;" and their "houses" and "vineyards," their "oxen" and "asses," should be taken from them, and "they should be only oppressed and crushed alway." Frequent seizures have been made of their effects, and they have been fined and plundered in almost all countries; and in innumerable instances, they have been forced to redeem their lives with their treasure.

"Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people." In several countries, in Spain and Portugal particularly, their children have been taken from them by order of the government, to be educated in the Popish religion. When they were banished from Portugal, the King ordered all their children under fourteen to be taken from them and baptised.

"Thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see." By cruel usage, extortions, and oppressions, which they have undergone, they have often been driven to madness and desperation; for instance, in the reign of Richard the First, when the people were in arms to make a general massacre of them, fifteen hundred of them seized on the city of

York to defend themselves; but, being besieged, they offered to capitulate, and to ransom their lives with money. The offer being refused, one of them cried in despair, that it was better to die courageously for the Law, than to fall into the hands of the Christians. Every one immediately stabbed his wife and children. The men afterwards retired into the King's palace, which they set on fire, in which they consumed themselves with the palace and furniture.

"And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations, whither the Lord shall lead thee." This prophecy we see and hear fulfilled almost every day. The word *Jew* is continually used as a proverb. They are generally hated. Mahommedans, heathens, and nominal Christians, however they may disagree in other points, yet agree in vilifying, abusing, and persecuting the Jews. "And the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of *long continuance*." Such are the awful denunciations of prophecy against the Jews, which have overtaken them on account of their many and aggravated transgressions; but, above all, on account of their rejection of the Messiah. It was then that the measure of their iniquity was filled up. 1 Thess. ii. 15, "They both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." Thus their own imprecation has been remarkably and awfully fulfilled, "His blood be upon us and on our children."

The foregoing prophecies were all delivered by Moses *more than* 3000 *years ago;* and many others, to the like effect, are scattered through the writings of all the subsequent prophets.

Jesus Christ himself has added a most minute and remarkable prediction concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, uttered nearly forty years before that event. A full and most striking illustration of this prophecy, in a detail of all the circumstances which took place, is given by Josephus, who was himself an eye-witness on the spot. The temple was burnt on the 10th day of the month of August, of the year 70, the same day and month of the year on which it had been burnt by the king of Babylon. Tacitus, the Roman historian, confirms, by his own account of the siege, the testimony of Josephus.

The destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem is an event of great importance. A great number of prophecies were thereby accomplished; and by putting a visible and necessary end to the Jewish economy, it made way for the dispensation of the Messiah.

Titus, who commanded the Roman army, was exceedingly desirous of saving the temple. But, contrary to his most earnest wish, circumstances apparently accidental led to its conflagration. A dreadful massacre ensued, in which thousands perished, and the whole city, with its fortifications, palaces, towers, and walls, were levelled to the ground. Before the temple was consumed, Titus entered into the sanctuary and most holy place, and was struck with its remaining grandeur. Out of the former he saved the golden candlestick, the table of the shew-bread, the altar of incense, all of pure gold, and the book of the law wrapped up in a rich

golden tissue. After Vespasian's triumph at Rome, he built a Temple of Peace, in which he laid up these golden vessels and instruments; but the law, and the purple veils of the holy place, he ordered to be deposited in his palace. These precious relics of the temple worship were carried off by Genseric, 400 years afterwards, when he pillaged Rome. The triumphal arch of Titus, erected at Rome, designed to commemorate the taking of Jerusalem, which remains to this day, is a striking memorial of the truth of this fact, and a noble monument of antiquity, which the writer of these pages has seen. On the south side of it is represented the triumphal entry into Rome, and on the opposite side is shown the procession of the captive Jews, with staves in their hands, bearing the spoils of the Temple of Jerusalem: the GOLDEN CANDLESTICK with its SEVEN BRANCHES; the GOLDEN TABLE and the CENSER, with the SILVER TRUMPETS. There is a small passage at one side for the Jews, as they cannot be prevailed on to pass under the arch which celebrates the triumph of their enemies and the downfall of their national glory.

To this prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus Christ added another, strikingly descriptive of its condition since that event to the present hour, which also contains an intimation that the Jews shall at last be restored. "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and *Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*," or, as Paul expresses it, "*till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*."

The present state of the Jews is remarkably declared,

in connexion with their future restoration, in the words of the prophet Hosea. "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image (or altar), and without an ephod (or priest to wear an ephod), and without teraphim (or Divine manifestations). Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." According to the law of Moses, their solemn feasts and sacrifices are limited to one certain place, which has been now for many ages in the hands of strangers and aliens, who will not suffer them to be observed there. Thus has been fulfilled, even to the letter, the prediction of Daniel, when speaking of the coming of the Messiah. He shall "make an end of sin-offering;" and again, "*he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.*" In order to falsify these predictions, and especially those of Jesus Christ respecting Jerusalem and the temple, the Emperor Julian attempted to rebuild the temple, and promised to restore the Jews to their long-lost land. His purpose, however, was frustrated; and his death, when returning from his Persian expedition, put an end to their hopes from that quarter.

This purpose of Julian to rebuild the temple is said to have been defeated by fire breaking out and rendering the place inaccessible to the workmen. The account is attested by various Christian writers, and also by Ammianus Marcellinus, of whom Gibbon, in referring to his testimony, remarks,—"The philosophic soldier, who loved the virtues without adopting the prejudices of his master, has recorded in his judicious and candid history of his own times, the extraordinary

obstacles which interrupted the restoration of the temple of Jerusalem. 'Whilst Alypias, assisted by the governor of the province, urged with vigour and diligence the execution of the work, horrible balls of fire, breaking out near the foundations, with frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place from time to time inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen; and the victorious element continuing in this manner obstinately and resolutely bent, as it were, to drive them to a distance, the undertaking was abandoned.'"—*Gibbon*, vol. ii. 389, 4to.

The truth of this account is strenuously maintained by some, and doubted by others. It is enough, however, for Christians to know that the impious design of Julian was finally and completely frustrated in the providence of God, who effects his purposes in whatever way to him seems good—whether by causing the earth to open and swallow up his enemies, as in the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numbers, xvi. 32), or by means that are conformable to the course of common events, as when he obliged Saul to desist from pursuing his servant David, by a report that the Philistines had invaded the land (1 Sam. xxiii. 27). According, then, as the validity of the evidence adduced appears to us sufficient, or otherwise, we may believe or discredit the preceding alleged miracle. To hesitate respecting such a relation is very different from refusing to credit any miracle or fact recorded in the Scriptures. Yet some, of whom better things might be expected, have ventured to express doubts respecting the reality of demoniacal possessions. Such a daring denial of what is expressly asserted in the word of God, is one of the baneful effects of those lax, erroneous, and cul-

pable opinions held by many, regarding the inspiration of the Scriptures. The prophecy of Jesus Christ respecting the temple needs not any support from the establishment of Julian's miraculous discomfiture. The final destruction of the temple and the city; the abolition of the Mosaical dispensation; the total overthrow and dispersion of the Jews, constitute altogether a standing *miracle*, confounding the sceptic with incontestable proof of the divine origin of the Christian religion.

The preservation of the Jews as a separate people, and their restoration at last, are as distinctly announced as their various calamities and dispersion.

Moses says, "The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them; and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity, because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God. But I will, for their sakes, remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt, in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the Lord." Jeremiah says, "Fear thou not, O Jacob, my servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee." And again the prophet Amos, writes, "For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain

fall upon the earth." Accordingly, although the Jews are dispersed among all nations, they still continue a distinct people, and yet they nowhere live according to their own laws, nowhere elect their own magistrates, and nowhere can enjoy the full exercise of their religion.

No people have continued unmixed so long as they have done, and this is true not only of those who have been sent to colonize in foreign lands, but also of those who have remained in their own country. The northern nations have descended in swarms into the more southern parts of Europe; but where are they now to be discerned and distinguished? The Gauls went forth in great bodies to seek their fortune in foreign parts; but where are the remaining traces of their nationality? In France, who can separate the race of the ancient Gauls from the various people who from time to time have settled in that kingdom? In Spain, who can distinguish exactly between the first possessors, the Spaniards, and the Goths, and the Moors, who conquered and kept possession of the country for some ages? In England, who can pretend to say with certainty which families are derived from the ancient Britons; and which of them can trace an unbroken and unmingled descent from the Romans, the Saxons, the Danes, or Normans?

The most ancient and honourable pedigrees can be traced no further than a certain period; and, beyond that, there is nothing but conjecture and uncertainty, obscurity, and ignorance. But the Jews can go up higher than any nation; they can even deduce their pedigree from the beginning of the world. They may not know from what particular tribe or family they are

descended; but they know certainly that they all sprung from the stock of Abraham. And yet it might be supposed that the contempt with which they have been treated, and the hardships they have undergone, in almost all countries, would have made them desirous to forget or renounce their nation; but they profess it, they glory in it; and after so many wars, massacres, and persecutions, they still subsist, they still continue to verify the prediction of Balaam, that "the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be numbered with the nations." We see them excluded from the only country to which they have any attachment, vagabonds on the earth, dispersed indifferently through every clime, without a home, aliens and foreigners in every nation among whom they dwell, the scorn snd outcasts of the whole world; and yet, in despite of their degraded condition, they still look with all the fondness of an exile to their long-lost land. In all their wretchedness, they still survive, a numerous and forlorn people; and although everywhere spurned, reviled, and oppressed, they still cling to their offensive profession, and are neither worn out by hard usage, nor thereby induced to renounce their distinctive character, and take refuge in the mass of the people among whom they live.

The predictions concerning the restoration of the Jews, are also express. "Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, even they and their children, and their children's children for ever; and my servant David shall be their prince for ever."—"Then shall they know that I am the Lord

their God, who caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen; but I have gathered them into their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." These promises have already had a subordinate and typical fulfilment; but their ultimate accomplishment, after which the Lord will not hide his face any more from them, is still future.

In the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul declares the future restoration of Israel to the favour of God. After informing his brethren that the Jewish nation was like an olive branch broken off because of unbelief, and warning them to be on their guard lest they, too, as wild grafts, should be broken off, on the same account, he says, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so all Israel shall be saved."

The present situation of the Jews; their past condition also, and especially for the last 1700 years, is such, that, when compared with the foregoing prophecies, it is sufficient to strike infidelity dumb. Many object to the miracles of the first ages of Christianity; and, in order to discredit them, bring forward all the counterfeit miracles that can be raked together. They insist, in like manner, that the prophecies of Scripture are either so obscure that they cannot be understood, and that they may mean any thing; or that they were written after the events which they are said to predict. Here, then, is a series of prophecies concerning facts obvious to their senses, of which it cannot be even

alleged they are either forged or obscure. Nor, although they were to collect all the conjectures that ever came to pass, which have been dignified with the name of prophecies, can they pretend to show any thing like the secombined pre-intimations of great, extensive, and complex historical facts.

If, admitting that there is something remarkable in these predictions, they should assert that the event itself may be accounted for from natural causes, let them, in all the history of the world, point out any thing similar. It is sometimes said, that the Jews believe themselves to be the favourites of Heaven; and it is natural to cling to such a flattering idea. If it be so, what was it which, notwithstanding all the calamities they have suffered, has *indelibly impressed* on them this belief? When men, in opposing evident truth, attempt to get rid of one difficulty, they only fall into another. Let all be upon their guard, lest the declaration applied to the Jews by Paul, be in them also verified. "*Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in* YOUR *days, a work in which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*"

Besides the above, and many similar prophecies, there is a series of predictions in the Scriptures, which, commencing from the time of Daniel, describe the general state of the world till the consummation of all things. These prophetic intimations were first communicated in a dream to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, under the form of a great image, having its several parts composed of different metals. This vision left a deep impression on the monarch's mind, but he

was unable to recollect this night vision. The prophet Daniel, however, then at Babylon, brought the whole to his remembrance, and interpreted the meaning of the vision as follows (Daniel, ii. 31):

"Thou, O King, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay, Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away, and no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream, and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the King. Thou, O King, art a King of kings, for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay and

part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms; and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God hath made known to the King what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

Thus the four great successive kingdoms of the world, the fourth, after destroying the others, being divided into ten parts, and the fifth and last kingdom set up without the power of man, and finally destroying every remnant of the image, were represented to Nebuchadnezzer. The transient dream, which so soon vanished, and the lifeless image, were both emblems of the emptiness and vanity of all earthly glory.

The same events were afterwards represented to Daniel, under the appearance of four wild beasts. These four beasts, according to the interpretation given to Daniel, signified the same with the four constituent parts of Nebuchadnezzer's splendid image. They arose out of the great sea, on which the four

winds strove, which represented the earth and its inhabitants kept in violent and perpetual agitation by ambitious conquerors. They appeared not all at once, but one after another, which signified that these kingdoms should succeed each other.

Daniel, vii. 2, "I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it, and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo, another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl. The beast had also four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; and, behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the

fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Daniel being desirous to know the interpretation of this vision, enquired the meaning of it at one who appeared present in the scene. "I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." This was a very clear general interpretation of the whole vision. But Daniel wished to receive a more particular account of the fourth kingdom, and

of the little horn which persecuted the saints, and made war against them.

"Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass, which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell, even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." To these questions Daniel received the following answer: "Thus he said, the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise, and another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom

is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

In this vision, the state of the world, till the end of time, was represented. The first beast, with its characteristic features and appendages, was an emblem of the Chaldean monarchy. The next beast, with its appropriate signs, represented the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. The one that followed, combining the appearance of ferocity and swiftness, and with *four* heads, denoted the Macedonian or Grecian empire, erected by Alexander the Great, on the ruins of the Persian Monarchy, and which continued in four divisions under his successors.

That these three beasts represented the Chaldean, the Persian, and the Macedonian monarchies, there is no room to doubt. The head of the image, which corresponded to the first of them, was, as Nebuchadnezzar was told, his own empire. And afterwards, when the second and third beasts were represented to Daniel in another vision, under the emblems of a ram and he-goat, he was expressly informed of their meaning, chap. viii. 20—22,—"The ram which thou sawest, having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia; and the rough goat," (which destroyed the ram, and brake his two horns,) "is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand out of the nation, but not in his power." What is intended by the fourth beast, out of whom sprung ten horns, cannot be mistaken.

The fourth beast appeared "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the resi-

due with the feet of it; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns."— "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn." The Roman empire devouring the former kingdoms, and subduing the whole earth, was thus represented to Daniel, as it had been in Nebuchadnezzar's image, as "iron that breaketh in pieces, and subdueth all things." The ten horns (a horn in Scripture being an emblem of power), signifying the same thing with the ten toes in that image, denoted, as Daniel was informed, ten kings that should arise. This was fulfilled in the ten kingdoms which sprung up out of the Roman empire, and which are known in history by the name of the ten kingdoms of the Western Empire. That which was signified by the little horn, which afterwards came up among the rest, whose cunning, arrogance, persecuting spirit, blasphemies, and lawless conduct, is in each of these particulars characterised, has been remarkably verified in that singular power, "diverse" from every other power that ever was on earth, which arose among the ten kingdoms. Although a *little* horn, and remarkable, not for strength, but for *eyes* and a *mouth*, speaking very great things, and a *look* more stout than his fellows, it usurped dominion over the rest.

At length the Ancient of days, the eternal God, arrayed in awful majesty, seated on his throne, was emblematically represented. "Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." Because of the great words which the little horn spake, the judgment was set, "the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame." "One like the Son of Man" then

"came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." This last part of the vision had appeared to Nebuchadnezzar, as "a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which had broken in pieces the image, and made it like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors." This stone was distinct from the image, and directly opposite to it and all its interests. It is therefore a kingdom set up by the power of God, without the concurrence of human policy or force.

The same things were thus represented in both Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's visions. To the worldly mind of Nebuchadnezzar, mighty conquerors and extensive flourishing empires would exhibit a show of glory, which was represented by a splendid and immense image. To the spiritual mind of Daniel, they would only appear terrible, odious, and destructive, which was more aptly denoted by the appearance of fierce and devouring wild beasts; the monarchies thus represented, being the great supporters of idolatry and persecution in the world.

In these visions, we have a prophetical abstract of the most signal events that should take place through all succeeding ages. As far as the accomplishment has yet proceeded, it has been most exact and undeniable, and it is proceeding at this day. These four monarchies, the mightiest that ever appeared on earth, have been far more celebrated than any others. Their history comprises the grand transactions of mankind from the days of Daniel to the present time. The kingdom of

God, likewise, has been much more concerned with them than with any other empires. The countries belonging to them have been hitherto the chief seat of the Redeemer's kingdom, which has been gradually enlarging, and will be rendered universal at the time of the total subversion of the last of them. This termination of these kingdoms of this world, also coincides with that prediction to the Jews, already quoted,—"Fear thou not, O Jacob, my servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee; *for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee*, but I will not make a full end of thee."

When Daniel recorded these visions, only the first of the four kingdoms had appeared. About 600 years afterwards, when the apostles wrote, that first kingdom, with the second and third, had been subverted, and the fourth kingdom subsisted in vigour. It was not then divided, as afterwards, into ten parts. That part of the prediction, therefore, with all that follows, remained to be accomplished. Accordingly, what was then future, is taken up in the New Testament, and much dwelt upon, especially in the book of Revelation, the descriptions in which entirely coincide with those of Daniel, but are much amplified and illustrated. Porphyry the philosopher, who wrote against the Scriptures in the third century, was so much struck with the exact fulfilment of Daniel's prophecies, as far as they had proceeded in his time, that, contrary to all historical evidence, he insisted they could not be written by Daniel, but more recently by some one else, under his name.

Before the book of Revelation was written, the apostle Paul took up the subject of the above prophecies.

What he had prophetically said in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, having been misunderstood by them, and construed as an intimation that the end of the world was at hand, he wrote to them a second epistle, in which he corrected their mistake. In doing this, he assures them, that before that event a great corruption of Christianity was to take place: but that it would not commence during the continuance of the Roman Empire. He describes the same power which was represented to Daniel under the emblem of the little horn, who, Daniel declares, "shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws."

Concerning him, Paul says—"Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: *only he who now letteth* (obstructeth) *will let until he be taken out of the way;* and then that wicked one shall be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming." Here there is a power described, not under an infidel form, but "that sitteth in the temple of God," occupying the place of God. Paul declares that this mystery of iniquity was already at work, but would be restrained till he who obstructed was taken out of the way.

It is a well-known fact, and particularly worthy of being observed, that the early Christians understood this obstruction, which at last was to be taken out of the way, to mean the Roman empire; for, in Tertullian's Apology, at the end of the second century, he expressly refers to this declaration of the apostle's, in order to prove the interest that Christians felt in the duration of that empire. "Even now," says Tertullian, quoting Paul's words, "'the mystery of iniquity is working; only he who obstructeth will obstruct until he is taken out of the way.' (2 Thess. xi. 7.) Who is this but the Roman empire, whose *division into so many kingdoms will bring on Antichrist*, and then shall that wicked one be revealed?" Most of the early Christian writers held the same doctrine. And Jerome, who wrote about the year 390, says, "It was the *general opinion*, that, towards the end of the world, ten kings should share the Roman empire, and that Antichrist should be the eleventh, and overcome all." And particularly Chrysostom, who wrote about the year 398, remarks—"When the Roman imperial supremacy shall be finally abolished, then *that power* will come. When that supremacy shall be dissolved, then will *he* obtrude himself into the vacancy of empire, and will endeavour to usurp to himself all power in things appertaining both to men and to God. But, as the empires which were before his time were each dissolved, that of the Babylonians by the Persians, and that of the Persians by the Macedonians, and that of the Macedonians by the Romans; so also shall the empire of the Romans be dissolved by Antichrist, but he himself by Christ." It therefore appears probable that the apostle Paul had personally informed the

Thessalonians of this, as he refers in his second Epistle to the things which he had said when among them. "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" 2 Thess. ii. 5.

The last part of the apostle's description (that the Lord should consume that wicked one with the spirit of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming) corresponds with the representation given by Daniel of the judgment being set, and because of the great words which the horn spake, of the body of the beast being destroyed, and given to the burning flame, and of the coming of the Son of man with the clouds of heaven. Paul also describes this Antichristian power, not only as wicked or "lawless," but as a deceiver and a worker of false miracles. "*Even him,*" he adds, "*whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.*"

In his Epistle to Timothy, Paul mentions this same great corruption of Christianity, which he introduces by saying, that it was expressly declared by the Spirit of God:—"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines concerning demons; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." The apostle had alluded before to the lying wonders or *false miracles,* and now he speaks of the *pious frauds* which are justified by that man of sin, and of his *forbidding to marry,*

and *commanding to abstain from meats ;* also of his doctrines concerning demons, his worshipping of angels and the departed spirits of those called saints, as the heathens worshipped demons, or the manes of departed men whom they deified. All this is to be connected with what is also said of his sitting in the temple of God, his thinking to change times and laws, and his persecution of the saints. The grand Popish apostasy and corruption of Christianity, which has actually taken place in these "latter times," is thus, in its various and extraordinary features, distinctly pointed out.

In the Book of Revelation, the same subject is taken up more at large. The "little horn" of Daniel, "speaking great words against the Most High, and thinking to change times and laws," and the "wicked one" described by Paul "opposing himself to God, and *commanding* to abstain from what God has created to be received," is, in the Book of the Apocalypse, made known to John, and fully described as "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication" (the general figure employed in Scripture for idolatrous worship), and by whom "the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk (intoxicated) with the wine of her fornication." She is represented as "*drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.*" As the persecutor of the people of God, she is called Babylon ; the antitype of that city which persecuted and led Israel into captivity in ancient times. The place of her residence is also pointed out. She is described as "that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth," and as "sitting on *seven moun-*

tains." This prediction is so clear, that, even according to Gibbon, it has been literally fulfilled. "Those," says he, "who survey with a curious eye the revolutions of mankind, may observe, that the gardens and circus of Nero on the Vatican, which were polluted with the blood of the first Christians, have been rendered still more famous by the triumph and by the abuse of the persecuted religion. On the same spot a temple, which far surpasses the ancient glories of the Capitol, has been since erected by the Christian pontiffs, who, deriving their claim of universal dominion from an humble fisherman of Galilee, have succeeded to the throne of the Cæsars, given laws to the barbarian conquerors of Rome, and extended their spiritual jurisdiction from the coast of the Baltic to the shores of the Pacific Ocean."

This power is also denominated by John "a wild beast," the emblem of a worldly persecuting government. And he adds, "the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings—these have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast."

The apostle Paul had informed the Thessalonians, that this great corruption was not to take place till after the removal of the Roman empire; and John distinctly declares its continuance to be 1260 years. This is exactly the period also fixed by Daniel, from whose vision we are informed that this power should endure until a time, and times, and the dividing of time. In prophetical language, a time is taken for a year; times, the plural, are two years; and the dividing of time, half a year. This is the same with forty-two months, reckoning, according to the general computation formerly, of thirty days to a month;

which, again, is the same period as 1260 days,—a year, in the language of prophecy, being denoted by a day. Accordingly, John twice fixes that period exactly in these ways. He says the holy city shall be trodden down "forty and two months," and the witnesses shall prophesy in sackloth "a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Again, he mentions the period of the present confusion in the kingdom of God, describing the church of God under the figure of a woman who has fled into the wilderness, and is fed there "one thousand two hundred and threescore days;" and again, in mentioning the Antichristian power, and using, concerning it, the very words of Daniel, that he had "a mouth speaking great things," and, according to Paul, "blasphemies," he says, "power was given unto him to continue forty and two months."

As Nebuchadnezzar had beheld in his vision the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, break the image in pieces, and drive it away like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; as Daniel, on the appearance of the "Son of Man," had seen the "Beast slain, his body destroyed and given to the burning flame;" and as Paul had declared, that the Lord would consume that wicked one with "the spirit of his mouth and with the brightness of his coming:" so John at length witnessed, in vision, the majestic procession of the Son of Man, whose "name is called the Word of God—the KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS," followed by the heavenly hosts going forth to the last conflict with the Beast, and with the kings of the earth who were also ranged against him, whom he cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Immediately afterwards John says, "I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years; and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season."

How remarkable is this chain of prophecy revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, delivered by Daniel, and, at the distance of about six hundred years, completed by the apostles Paul and John! It presents a sketch of all the great events of the last three or four thousand years, and of those which are yet to happen to the end of time. First, we have the succession of the four great heathen powers of the world from Daniel's time; then the division of the last into the ten kingdoms; the springing up of a power among them, apparently of little comparative strength, but which, by art and cunning, gains the ascendency. This Papal power is entirely different from any other that ever was in the world; and it has extended its dominion further, and, in its zenith, reigned with more absolute sway, than ever did Pagan Rome. Next, we have the period of the duration, and afterwards an account of the total destruction of this power, involving that of all the kingdoms which support and stand connected with its usurped authority. This will be the commencement of a thousand years of peace and prosperity to the church of God.

Of that glorious period, the peaceful and prosperous

reign of Solomon appears to have been a type. Then after many violent and bloody contentions with enemies, both within and without, a universal peace was established. The Temple was erected and finished, the instituted worship was completely observed, and all the promises to Israel of temporal prosperity were fulfilled in their utmost extent.

In like manner, the present otherwise unaccountable and disordered state of things among the people of God, represented in prophecy by the figure of a woman, who has fled from the face of her mortal enemy into a wilderness, shall be brought to an end. Satan, who at present goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, who is styled the god of this world, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, shall then be bound for a thousand years, during which he shall not as formerly deceive the nations. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands, shall strike the image, and break it to pieces, and shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. That kingdom, which is to "stand for ever," shall then occupy the place of all other kingdoms. The blessing of Abraham, in its fullest import, shall come upon all nations, of which the Jews also shall then partake. "As it is written, there shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." And, "if the casting away of Israel was the reconciling of the world, what shall be the receiving of them but life from the dead?" The people of God shall be all brought out of Babylon. Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to God. The most hostile nations shall be reconciled to Him and to each other. "In that day there shall be a high way out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian

shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." Jesus shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, his name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto his name. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. All the predicted blessings to Zion, already fulfilled in part, shall then be fully accomplished. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." These happy consequences of Messiah's peaceful and righteous government, when it shall become universal, and take full effect, Jews and Gentiles submitting themselves to it, are minutely described in a variety of other prophecies.

Regarding these predictions, there has been a substantial agreement among Christians, and the disputes among them, which relate chiefly to dates, in no degree affect the evidence arising from prophecy to the truth of revelation. In what is past all admire the fulfilment of His will, who is mighty in power, as well as wise in counsel. In what is to come they view the same grand objects, although differing about dates and certain circumstances. In the present aspect of the world, they see the approach of wonderful events. The history of the Roman world appears to be hastening to a grand

consummation. The nations of Europe are shaken to their centre. Ancient institutions are passing away, and men's minds are agitated with the expectation of still greater changes. The question, however, of the exact period of the termination of the 1260 years, continues still to be agitated, and probably will not be finally settled till it shall have arrived. Some consider it as near at hand, others regard it as more distant. Owing to this variety of opinion, people of the world, who have never examined the subject, hearing of such disputes among Christians, and at the same time knowing that figurative language is used in the prophecies, turn from them with contempt. But it is the contempt of ignorance.

This contempt, however, is increased by over minute applications of the prophecies to present times, which, when discovered to be unfounded, lead many to suppose that they were justified in paying no attention whatever to the predictions contained in the Scriptures. But while the danger of being dazzled with what takes place in our own time, should make Christians cautious on these subjects, the great outlines of the prophecies are sufficiently clear. They are calculated, long before their accomplishment, to awaken expectation, to excite hope, and to animate the people of God in the darkest periods. When they produce these effects, and are regarded as evidences to the truth of the Gospel, their legitimate end is attained. But there is one error against which Christians should be on their guard. However clear, in any respect, the prophecies may be, they ought never to be considered as a rule of duty, for which they are not intended.

The commencement of the Millennium, it has gen-

erally been calculated, will take place about the year 2000. The rise of the Antichristian power is thus dated from near the middle of the eighth century, to which, adding 1260 years, we are brought to the above period. Present appearances favour this opinion. Much remains to be done, but much is in progress. Knowledge is increasing, and the late extraordinary discoveries in arts and sciences, are preparing the means of fulfilment to all the predictions of God. Circumnavigators have explored the remotest parts of the world. To them, as well as to the distant colonies that belong to Europe, the advantages of civilisation are beginning to extend. The translation of the Scriptures into all languages, is rapidly advancing, and the light of the Gospel is breaking forth on the right hand and the left. The Lord reigneth; of the increase of his government there shall be no end. His purposes shall stand, and will all be accomplished by him in the best manner, and at the most proper season. "I the Lord will hasten it in his time." *

* The year in which Jesus Christ was born, according to the computation most generally received, was the 4000th from the creation, which corresponds precisely with the time which an old tradition of the Jews fixes as the beginning of the days of the Messiah. They confess that this is the very period pointed out by the prophecies of the Old Testament for his coming; but they affirm that the fulfilling of them has been delayed on account of their sins. According to this tradition—which is said to be of great antiquity, and is still retained by the Jews as one of the most authentic—there were to be 2000 years before the law, 2000 years under the law, and 2000 years under the Messiah. And thus the time of the millennium, or the 1000 years during which Satan shall be bound, and of the accomplishment of the predictions concerning the complete triumph of the Gos-

CHAPTER XXIII.

EVIDENCE DERIVED FROM CHRONOLOGICAL HARMONIES, AND REMARKABLE COINCIDENCES FOUND IN SCRIPTURE.

VARIOUS circumstances and occurrences, in harmony with each other, are recorded in the Bible of such a nature, so numerous, and so distant from each other, that they cannot be attributed to chance, and so far beyond the power of human agency, that they can only be referred to the express interposition of the great Disposer of all events. Over such occurrences, the Sacred Writers had evidently no control, nor do they appear to have had, in general, any knowledge of the purpose which the recording of them was intended to serve. They are everywhere interspersed throughout the Scriptures, and bear the indubitable mark of premeditated design and Almighty operation. They prove that from the beginning of time, to the close of the sacred canon, including a period of more than 4000 years, a settled plan was acted on, and that those Scriptures in which such striking coincidences are recorded, are the production of Him to whom alone are known all his works from the foundation of the world, and who only has the power to regulate them. A few examples of these shall now be given. If our atten-

pel, and the introduction of universal purity and peace, will be the 7000th year of the world, corresponding to the original seventh day of rest.

tion is called to them both in the Old Testament and in the New; as in Exodus xii. 41, and Matthew i. 17; and if we observe certain numbers particularly distinguished throughout the Scriptures, are not these intimations from God himself, that such harmonies and coincidences, as are contained in his book, ought not to pass unnoticed?

That the import of these coincidences is not fanciful, but that it is the intention of the Spirit of inspiration, whose wisdom is unfolded not only in the matter, but also in the manner of revelation, that they should be attended to, is evident from their nature. A few coincidences, associated by no connecting principle, would not indicate design. But the harmonies of times, and coincidence of events, which shall now be pointed out, and a multitude of others that might be referred to, are of such a description, as by their number and their nature, place it beyond all doubt that they have been regulated by a superintending power. As it is impossible that they could have been forged, so they cannot be authentic without proving the Scriptures, in which they are found, to be the work of God. He only could produce them whose Providence is continually employed in giving effect to his eternal counsels. The importance of the coincidence exhibited at the opening of the New Testament, arises solely from the coincidence itself as being a thing remarkable. Had the Spirit of prophecy divided the generations into three equal parts, it might have been observed as a fulfilment of prophecy. But the only point of view in which the Spirit of Inspiration holds it forth as worthy of attention, is the remarkable circumstance of such a coincidence. It is possible that, in the following instances,

some inaccuracies may be discovered, but, on the whole, it is believed they will be found to be correct. Assuredly they are very astonishing, and exhibit a species of evidence to the divine original of the Scriptures, of a most singular description, but which appears to have been too generally overlooked.

Human life has two different terminations; some die by a violent, others by a natural death; but those who shall be alive at the last day, will not pass through either the one or the other of those ways, but by a third, which shall be a sudden transformation of their body, by which they will become incorruptible, (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52). Thus there are three different modes ordained for man's departure from this world. These three modes are distinctly indicated in the three first men whose departures are recorded in Scripture. The departure of the first, Abel, was violent, that of the second, Adam, was natural, that of the third, Enoch, was supernatural and miraculous. These three departed in the above order, immediately following each other, as will be seen by calculating the years of Enoch's life. The departure from this world of every one of the human race, must take place in one of the three ways thus pointed out in these three persons. And as they who shall be changed without seeing death shall be the last to leave this world, so Enoch, who represented them, was the last of the three. God, who dictated the Scriptures, hath thus at their opening given in abridgement, a view of what he intended to develope respecting the exit of men from the beginning of the world. even to the end.

The number, 7, which, as the creation of the heavens and the earth was finished in six days, and God rested

from his work on the seventh, is reckoned the number of perfection, holds a very conspicuous place throughout the whole of the Scriptures.

It seems to have become proverbial, even from the beginning of the world, to amplify a matter, in placing a 7 followed by 70 times 7. "If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold." And our Lord commands us to forgive not only 7 times, but 70 times 7. A similar multiplication may be remarked in many of the works of God, especially in the dispensation of times.

Methuselah lived 7 years longer than any other man. The 7th and last year which God gave him, was also the last of the old world. As Lamech in giving a name to his son Noah, predicted rest, so his age was altogether composed of septenaries, the number of rest. Enoch, who was translated bodily to heaven, was the 7th man after Adam. Lamech was the 7th who after Enoch departed from the world, the 7th who died after Adam, having lived 777 years; for after Enoch, Lamech was the 7th patriarch who departed from this world; but if we do not count Enoch, as he departed without dying, Lamech was the 7th who died after Adam.

The following is a remarkable period of 7 times as many times as God had allowed to the world in announcing to it the deluge. This term was 120 years, (Gen. vi. 3). Now the years of the remaining of the Israelites in the land of Canaan after it was conquered, until they went out from it to be taken to Babylon, were 7 times 120 years; for from the year in which they completed the subduing of the land, which was the sixth of the government of Joshua, until the first year of the captivity of Babylon, we find exactly 840

years, which are 7 times 120 years, which God had given to the men of the ancient world, when he threatened them with a deluge. Seven clean animals of each kind were saved in the ark.

In the seventh generation after Adam, Enoch was translated. In the fourteenth generation after Enoch, Lot's wife was turned into a statue. The one is lifted up to heaven, the other is planted and fixed in the earth. This punishment corresponded with the offence. The wife of Lot stopped on the road contrary to the command of God, and God rendered her immoveable. These two examples are recorded to be observed by men. And the interval of generations that passed between the one of these miracles and the other is worthy of consideration. The second happened in the time of Abraham, who was of twice the seventh generation from Enoch, as Enoch was the seventh from Adam.

The following are concurrences of several septenaries in Jacob and his son Joseph. Jacob, in the year 77 of his age, went to Laban; he served him 7 years; he married, being 77 years of age, and lived 7 times 3 times 7 years, which are 147. Joseph, his son, predicted to Pharoah 7 years of abundance, and 7 years of famine. He lived 70 years from the entrance of his father Jacob into Egypt. And 14 generations, twice 7, passed after Jacob, until the descendants of Jacob, the tribe of Ephraim, put itself at the head of the revolt of the ten tribes under Jeroboam, one of the descendants of Joseph. This happened at the commencement of the reign of Rehoboam, who was of the 14th generation after Jacob inclusively.

At their entrance into Canaan, the Israelites, by the command of God, compassed the city of Jericho

7 days, and on the 7th day when they had compassed it 7 times, and when the 7 priests sounded 7 trumpets, the wall fell down flat.

In order to comprehend the many acts under the law in which blood was employed, it is necessary to distinguish them, and to class them under different particulars. We find, then, that there were 7 sorts of actions solemnized by the sprinkling of blood. 1. The first passover in which the Israelites dipped the bunch of hyssop in the blood of the lamb, and sprinkled it on their doors for their protection. 2. The covenant solemnized between God and the people; for after Moses had recited it, he took the blood of the victims that were sacrificed, and sprinkled the half of it on the altar, and the other half on the people, saying, this is the blood of the covenant. 3. The consecration of the tabernacle and the priests. In this ceremony Moses sprinkled with blood the tabernacle and all the vessels of service, and he took the blood from the altar, and sprinkled it on Aaron, and on his sons, and on their robes. 4. The sacrifices both eucharistical and expiatory; for in all the sacrifices they poured the blood around the altar of burnt-offerings. In some of them they put it upon the altar of incense, and in some others they sprinkled it before the veil of the sanctuary, 5. The general atonement which they celebrated once a year. In this solemnity, the high priest sprinkled the blood 7 times before the mercy seat, then within the veil, and upon the altar of incense. 6. The purification of the unclean. This mystery is referred to, Heb. ix. 13, 14. 7. The ceremony of cleansing the leper. Thus the whole multitude of actions performed by the sprinkling of

blood, reduce themselves to the 7 kinds here enumerated. We may here remark, that the virtue of the Holy Spirit is represented by the number 7, which is the mark of perfection, to indicate, that by it we have the complete application of the blood of Christ.

The number 40, either of years or days, is often particularly marked in Scripture. The deluge commenced by a rain of 40 days, and Noah opened the window of the ark 40 days after the waters had retired from the summits of the highest mountains. God marked one period of 400 years, or ten quarantines of years to the posterity of Abraham, Gen. xv. 13. They expired at the going out of Egypt, when Moses, whose life was divided into three parts, finished the second quarantine of the years of his life. During 40 years he remained in Egypt, for 40 years he was a shepherd in Midian, and for 40 years he was a leader of Israel in the wilderness; for he was 40 years old when he fled into Midian, and 40 years afterwards he led the people out of Egypt. Thus the two last quarantines of ten, which were predicted to the patriarch Abraham, were the two first of the age of Moses. These ten quarantines were followed by another quarantine, which the Israelites accomplished in the wilderness, and which also terminated the last quarantine of the years of Moses. Such, and so exact, were the proportions of the days of Moses. And from the departure of the Israelites, to the year in which Solomon laid the foundations of the temple, which is a date of great consideration in the sacred history, there passed twelve quarantines of years, 1 Kings, vi. 1.

There passed 40 days from the birth of Christ till his first entrance into the temple, to be presented

there, according to the law, Lev. xii. Luke ii. 22; 40 days after his baptism, until he entered upon the functions of his office, having miraculously fasted all that time, and 40 days from his resurrection, till he ascended into heaven. In the first 40 days he appeared as an ordinary man, like all the others of the first-born of Israel, when they were carried to the temple to consecrate them to God. In the second 40 he appeared as a miraculous man, like Moses and Elijah, by an extraordinary abstinence. In the third 40 days he appeared as the Son of God, being declared to be s by his resurrection.

From the time when the Israelites accomplished the conquest of Canaan, till they were transported to Babylon, there passed twelve times 70 years, and from their being carried to Babylon till their return to Canaan 70 years, and from their return into Canaan till the death of Jesus Christ, 7 times 70 years, which are the 70 weeks of Daniel.

Matthew ranges the generations from Adam to Christ, dividing them into three fourteens. There is something similar with respect to languages. The language of Adam remained alone in the world, there being no other during fourteen generations. This unity continued to the nativity of Peleg, son of Heber; now Heber was of the fourteenth generation from the beginning of the world. Abraham, to whom God gave the promises, was the seventh from Heber; Moses, the lawgiver, was the seventh from Abraham. After the birth of Heber's first son, the plurality of languages took place at Babel. The primitive language, however, although it was not alone in the world, still remained alone in the church for the space

of fourteen generations, which were accomplished at the return of the captivity from Babylon. For then the Jews having corrupted their language in Babylon, and acquired those of other nations, brought them into Judea, Nehemiah xiii. 23, 24. Now this happened in the days of Zerobabel, who was of the forty-second generation from Heber, as may be seen in the genealogy of our Lord. In his genealogy, if we reckon the first and the last generations only, we see, that as from Adam to the confusion of languages in Babel, there were fourteen generations, so since the Jews were transported to Babylon, where they corrupted their language, until Christ, who conferred the gift of languages, there were fourteen generations.

Heber lived 430 years after the birth of Peleg, when the division of languages took place, even surviving Abraham. This patriarch had seen the time when the sacred language was the only language in the world, and he saw the commencement of the diversity of languages, but he and his descendants retained that of their ancestors, and were from Heber called Hebrews. It was proper that he who was older than all the languages of Babel should still live a long time after they took their rise, in order to preserve the primitive language in the families of the children of God; this term then was 430 years. The same number of years passed from the time of the promise to that of the law, soon after the departure from Egypt. A like number of years elapsed from the giving of the law to the anointing of David by Samuel in Bethlehem.

According to the dream of Joseph, 13 luminaries did homage to him, denoting his future promotion.

And 13 years he was a slave, before that the persons who were represented by the 13 luminaries made obeisance to him. Two dreams were the occasion of his captivity, two dreams were the occasion of his deliverance. For his brethren sold him for a slave on account of the two dreams which he recounted to them, and the two dreams which he interpreted in the prison to the two officers of the house of Pharaoh served as the preparation for his deliverance; and, finally, he was promoted to the government of all Egypt, on account of his explaining the two dreams of Pharaoh. At the command of Joshua, who was descended from Joseph, the sun and the moon stood still; so that what appeared in a dream to Joseph, really happened to Joshua.

God orders his works by number, weight, and measure. He caused the number of the Israelites to be taken after their departure from Egypt, from the age of 20 years and upward (Exod. xxxviii. 26), which amounted to 603,550. In the year following, God commanded the people again to be numbered (Numbers i. 46), but without comprehending under it the Levites, who had been counted the first time with the other tribes. But notwithstanding the subtraction, and the accidents which might have changed the number of the people from the preceding year, it was found that their number was still precisely 603,550, in which is seen a proportion which God held in the multiplication of that people. The exact number of 22,000 Levites, which were then counted (Numbers iii. 39), should also be noticed. We may likewise remark the number of 7000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal, and of the 144,000 in the 7th chapter of Revelation, and it

should be considered why the Holy Spirit, who never says any thing that is superfluous, not only names the entire number of those who have been marked in Israel, but farther divides that number into twelve times twelve thousand, ascribed by equal portions to the twelve tribes, each of which is designated one after another, marking its particular number; for this shows, that although we take the above as indefinite numbers of that typical people, the number of the elect, and multitude of believers, are measured by certain proportions, which are known to Him who is the author of them. The coincidence of the number of the 70 disciples of Christ, with that of the 70 judges which were appointed by Moses, and with the 70 children which Jacob had when he went down into Egypt should likewise be observed.

God having signified to Hezekiah his approaching death, granted to him, notwithstanding, a prolongation of life of 15 years. This number of years was very significant and bore a meaning which extended very far. It ought to be remarked, that a short time before the sickness of Hezekiah, the kingdom of Judah appeared to be drawing to a close; it had been invaded by the Assyrians, who still threatened it. God therefore promised to Hezekiah, not only the prolongation of his life, but also that of the duration of his kingdom; for at the same time that he assured him that he should live 15 years, he added that he would deliver him from the hand of the Assyrians, and would defend the city of Jerusalem. The 15 years, then, which were promised to Hezekiah, also expressed the continuance and stability of his kingdom. Hezekiah was the 15th king who had governed the kingdom of Judah, in which

the true religion was preserved. For from Saul, who was the first king, to Hezekiah inclusively, there were 15 kings of Judah. The illegitimate reign of Athalia is not reckoned among those of the true kings. As, then, the reign of Hezekiah was the 15th in the order of succession, God gave him 15 years, thus including in this abridgment all the preceding reigns, and recapitulating them by a like number of years, in the person of the 15th king. This confirmed at once the prolongation of the life and of the kingdom of Hezekiah, both of which seemed on the point of expiring. So that the life of this prince prolonged for 15 years, was a pledge of the subsistence of that throne which had carried 15 kings.

There were extraordinary and wonderful concurrences of proportions of times which preceded and followed the retrograding of the sun in the days of Hezekiah, viz.:—15 Jubilees, 15 weeks of years, 15 years, 15 kings, 15 quarantines of years. The year in which the Israelites divided the land of Canaan after having finished its conquest is a date of great importance, necessary to measure the time of the continuance of Israel in the land of promise. From that time till the going backwards of the sun in a time in which the kingdom of Judah was in great danger there passed 735 years. Now 735 years are 15 jubilees of 49 years, which are 7 times 7 years. From that time to the captivity of Babylon, there were 105 years, which are 15 times 7 years, or 15 weeks of years. These 15 weeks of years began by the 15 years which were miraculously added to the life of Hezekiah. Hezekiah was the 15th king in commencing with Saul, who had governed the people of God; as then

there had been 15 kings in the order of succession, God added 15 years to the life and reign of the 15th king. That throne subsisted after the cure of Hezekiah 7 times 15 years till the captivity. Those who reigned after it had begun, viz., Jechoniah and Zedekiah, were only vassals of the Babylonians.

The law continued from Moses, who was slow of speech, until John, the son of Zechariah who was dumb. The economy of the Old Testament, represented the observance of the law, as the means of obtaining righteousness and life if men fulfilled it. It, however, made them understand, that on account of their sins it could not justify them; and, that in this respect it was weak, and had its mouth shut. This seems to have been mysteriously represented both at the commencement and termination of that economy. To introduce the law, God made use of a man who spoke with difficulty; for Moses, when he was commanded to go to Pharaoh, excused himself on account of this defect. And to signify the abrogation of the law when its time expired, in order to give place to a more perfect dispensation, God struck the priest of the law dumb, who lost his power of speech in the temple itself, and at the hour when he should have pronounced a blessing on the people. Thus the law both in its commencement and termination, indicated that it could not pronounce upon us the great blessing of justification.

The history of the Old Testament terminates with a sacerdotal genealogy, Nehemiah xii.; and the history of the New Testament commences with a sacerdotal genealogy, which is that of Zechariah, father of John the Baptist. A Zechariah was the last to whom angels

showed themselves, under the Old Testament; and a Zechariah was the first to whom angels appeared at the beginning of the New Testament. Of these two Zechariahs, one was a prophet, the other a priest. The first word from heaven towards the commencement of the New Testament was pronounced by an angel; and the last word of the New Testament was pronounced by an angel. That first word towards the commencement of the New Testament, was pronounced in the temple to a priest, at the hour of incense. All these circumstances, the place, the person, the time, which served the ceremonial law, served to prepare the commencement of the New Testament, which is the end of the old. When the New Testament was closed, then the temple, the priesthood and all the sacrifices dissappeared.

This appearance of an angel in the temple, is the only one that ever took place. Never before had an angel been seen in the temple, and never was an angel seen there afterwards. Before that appearance angels had only been seen there in figure under the effigy of the cherubim. But as the coming of Christ, who is the true temple, and the Lord of angels, approached, God did what had never before happened, making an angel personally appear in the temple. This angel who appeared in the temple, is the same who formerly had predicted the ruin of the temple, and the suppression of the sacrifices, namely, Gabriel, Dan. ix. 26, 27. We know the term which he had fixed for their duration. Their destruction was to happen soon after the death of Christ, and Christ was to die at the end of the 70 weeks, which are 490 years, which commenced at the same time that that angel uttered the prediction.

Of these 490 years, 456 had expired, when Gabriel spoke to Zechariah, from which it might be inferred that the ruin of the temple was near. And so much the more, as that same angel who had predicted it long before, was now come within the temple, as the forerunner of its destruction. This circumstance forewarned the Jews, that they should no longer regard that temple but prepare to receive Christ, whose coming drew near.

The first miracle noted in the history of the New Testament, presented itself at the same hour, and in the same place, where a king Uzziah who had attempted to enter into the holy place, was attacked with the leprosy in the first temple. And now a priest being in the holy place, is there divinely struck in the second temple. The first miracle that happened towards the commencement of the New Testament, was in the temple; and the last miracle that was wrought in the temple, was performed at the close of the New Testament, when the Lord gave up his spirit.

The Gospel of Matthew commences by recounting the number of generations from Abraham to Christ; and thus first presents to us a long train of patriarchs and kings, which embellishes the frontispiece of the New Testament, and appear as the stars that preceded the coming of the Sun of Righteousness. All these generations are divided into three fourteens, each of which terminates in some remarkable change. The first 14 generations end in David, in whom commenced the royalty of Judah, that tribe from which our Lord sprung. The second terminates in the captivity of Babylon, which subverted the throne of David, The third and last finishes in Jesus Christ himself, who re-

established that kingdom, and brought the genealogies to a close. Thus, at the end of the three periods of 14 years, or of six periods of 7 years, Jesus Christ appeared in the seventh period, that portion of time which is so remarkably distinguished throughout the Scriptures. It should likewise be observed, that the duration of the life of David, which concluded the first period, was 70 years, and the captivity of Babylon, when the second period was completed, continued 70 years, and the time that elapsed from the nativity of Jesus Christ, which terminated the last period, and all the genealogies until the ruin of Jerusalem, in which the registers and catalogues of the families of the Jews were destroyed, was 70 years. All this astonishing conformity proves that God only could overrule these works, and that the Spirit of God only could dictate the Scriptures.

There were 10 generations from the creation to the deluge, 10 generations from the deluge to the promise. From Abraham to David there were 14 generations, from David to the captivity 14 generations, from the captivity to Jesus Christ 14 generations, in all 42 generations, which correspond with the 42 journeys of the Israelites from their departure out of Egypt till they entered Canaan. These genealogies serve to show, besides the origin of each nation, the origin of that nation from which Christ came; for it was necessary that his people, his tribe, and the family of which he was to be born, should be precisely indicated; and for this purpose we have the enumeration of so many persons whose names are recorded.

All the generations of Jesus Christ, comprehending that which is from eternity, are in number 77, and are ordered from 7 to 7. The genealogy of our Lord as-

cends a degree higher, and infinitely higher than all the others of which we read in Scripture. If we begin from whence the Evangelist Luke finishes, which is indifferent, we shall find that the 77 generations of the Son of God divide themselves into sevens, commencing with some circumstance that refers to the person of Christ. The first septenary commenced in God himself, Luke, iii. 38. The second septenary commenced in Enoch, the seventh man from Adam, and the first who ascended bodily into heaven. The third septenary commenced with Heber, during whose life the confusion of languages took place at Babel; when Christ ascended into heaven, he wrought a miracle of a directly contrary nature, conferring the gift of tongues. The fourth septenary commenced in Isaac, the first who was miraculously conceived, as a prelude of a greater miracle, namely, the conception of the Messiah. The fifth septenary commences with the departure from Egypt, and the celebration of the first passover, which was a figure of Christ sacrificed for us. The sixth, seventh, and eighth septenaries have their commencement when the Old Testament ceases to follow out the genealogy of our Lord.

All the evangelists exhibit the Saviour, but each of them in a different manner. Mark does not give his genealogy, but commences his history with his baptism. Matthew describes his descent from Abraham. Luke traces it up to Adam. Finally, John leads us to contemplate him in the beginning, in eternity, in which he was God and with God. Thus they severally introduce us to Christ, in ascending by the four different steps in which he is represented.

The Scriptures mark the time of the departure from

Egypt, as a period very important in many respects. If, then, we reckon the generations only from the departure out of Egypt to Jesus Christ, we find 49 generations, which are 7 times 7, a number very significant, and proper to represent the fulness of generations, which terminate in him.

There were 22 patriarchs from Adam to Jacob, when the nation of Israel was formed. There were 22 generations of high priests from the institution of the priesthood till the intermission of the sacrifices by the destruction of the first temple. There were 22 governors, legitimate and tyrannical, from the entrance of Israel into the land of promise, under the conduct of Joshua, to the first king, who was Saul. There were 22 kings, commencing with Saul, till the destruction of the first temple, when the royalty became extinct. (Athalia, who for a time usurped the royalty, which belonged to the children of Ahaziah, is not reckoned.) There were 22 generations in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, as given by Luke, from the captivity of Babylon, till he appeared. Besides the corresponding number of patriarchs, priests, governors, kings, and generations, there is another circumstance of a similar kind. In the 22d generation of the world, God renewed the promise respecting the seed of the woman; for Jacob, who was the 22d patriarch, spoke of Shiloh, the seed of the woman who was to come. And the 22d generation, after the ancestors of Shiloh were carried to Babylon, when it seemed that the promise was annihilated, was Shiloh himself. The first 22 generations received at their commencement the promise respecting the Son of the Virgin; and the last 22 generations terminated in the appearance of the Son of the Virgin.

The most remarkable periods of the church have had their commencement in a wilderness. The first time that angels spoke to any of the human race was in a wilderness; for Hagar, the first person whom an angel addressed, was in a wilderness. The first time that God spoke to Moses was also in a wilderness. The law was given in a wilderness. The tabernacle was constructed in a wilderness. The most illustrious types of Jesus Christ, the manna, the rock from which the water flowed, the miracle of the brazen serpent, were exhibited in a wilderness. The miraculous fasts of Moses, of Elijah, and of Jesus Christ, took place in a wilderness. The preaching of John the Baptist began in a wilderness. The first and last parts of Scripture were written in a wilderness. Thus the wisdom of God designed to demonstrate, in the most remarkable beginnings of his church, that it is a body distinguished from all the other societies that are in the world; that it is formed on other principles, has a different origin, and is not founded on any worldly empire.

There were four edifices whose construction God himself ordered and superintended. The first is the ark in which he preserved Noah during the deluge. The second is the tabernacle, which was constructed in the wilderness, around which the tribes of Israel were encamped. The third is the temple, built upon a mountain, in which all the people of God were assembled. The fourth is the heavenly Jerusalem, described in the 21st chapter of Revelation. There is, however, among these four edifices a great diversity: the first had no other foundation than the water on which it floated: the second was indeed placed upon the earth, but was moveable, having no fixed situation, and was com-

posed of materials which were separated and transported from one place to another; the third was fixed, founded upon a rock of solid materials, which promised long duration, but it was combustible, and subject to destruction, as in effect happened when it was twice overturned to the foundation. But the fourth, which is Jerusalem from above, built by the hand of God, without any human co-operation, possesses a firmness that cannot be shaken, and an imperishable duration. This fourth edifice is the end and perfection of the three that precede it, which having represented the church in its different degrees of weakness, will terminate in that immoveable state in which it will be completed when settled in heaven.

Among the saints many were rendered illustrious either by their miraculous birth, as Isaac and John the Baptist, or by the miracles which they wrought, as Elisha, or by the gift of prophecy, as Daniel, or by their resurrection, as Lazarus, or by ascending into heaven, as Enoch or Elijah; but never did any one enjoy all these prerogatives together except the Son of God, who was miraculously conceived, exercised the power of miracles, and that of prophecy, returned from the dead, ascended to heaven. In all these miraculous distinctions, too, he infinitely surpassed all the others. Some were born of mothers who were past the age of child-bearing; but Jesus Christ only was born of a virgin. Some had the spirit of prophecy; but he had it without measure. Some had the power of working miracles on certain occasions; but he possessed it at all times. Some raised up others; but he raised up himself. Some were taken up to heaven; but he ascended up thither by his own power.

Jesus Christ entered the temple at different times in different characters, and for different purposes. First as a private person, when he was presented to the Lord forty days after his birth; at the age of twelve years, when he heard the doctors, and asked them questions; when he acted as a teacher; when he acted as the Redeemer pardoning an adulteress; when he acted as Lord and Master of the temple, in casting out the money-changers; when he acted as a Sovereign in the miracles which he wrought. As a mark of his pre-eminence, he was the only one who ever performed miracles within the temple.

In the person of Enoch, the seventh from the creation, the first miracle was wrought; for he was translated without seeing death, yet he himself never performed any miracle. The seventh from Abraham, who had Isaac miraculously, was Moses, the first man who wrought miracles. The seventh who was raised from the dead is the first who wrought miracles under the New Testament, the first who arose to glory, and the first who raised himself; this is Jesus Christ in whom is perfection. He is the seventy-seventh in the genealogy which commenced with God himself.

In the whole of the Old Testament, we read of only seven men to whom God gave the power of working miracles,—Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, a prophet spoken of in 1 Kings xiii., Elijah and Elisha. Under the New Testament Jesus Christ gave this power to seventy of his followers at one time. Of all the progenitors of Jesus Christ, among whom there were so many illustrious persons, as Enoch, Abraham, David, no one was ever honoured with this gift; and none of the tribe of Judah ever wrought a miracle till

the coming of the Lord. The first who wrought miracles under the Old Testament was he who introduced the law, namely, Moses; the first who wrought them under the New Testament was he who introduced the gospel, namely, Jesus Christ. This prerogative belonged to him, to be the first to seal the New Testament by miracles, as Moses had been honoured to be the first to seal with them the Old.

The Scriptures name only four persons who were enabled to exercise the power of raising the dead, two under the Old Testament, and two under the New. The two first were Elijah and his successor Elisha. The one raised the son of the widow of Sarepta, the other that of the Shunamite. The two others are Peter and Paul. The one raised Dorcas, the other Eutychus. Thus God gave power to two of his servants before the coming of the Lord to raise the dead, and two after his departure from the world. Christ appeared between the two former and the two latter, as the sun among the planets, shedding his vivifying virtue over the dead of both Testaments.

The first miracle of raising the dead was wrought at Zarephath of Sidon, by the prophet Elijah, who raised the son of the widow; the last miracle of the same description was wrought in Troas, a city of Asia Minor by the apostle Paul, who raised Eutychus; both of them countries of the Gentiles. This proved to them what they believed to be contrary to reason and impossible, and showed that the power of God in raising the dead was not confined to the land of Israel.

Moses, who performed so many great and distinguished miracles, never restored life to one that was dead. The law out of Christ is a killing letter, and

the ministry of Moses was the ministry of death. His office did not give life, but on the contrary death. In witness of this, and to show that the resurrection and the life must be sought for elsewhere, Moses never received power to raise a dead person.

Among the miracles which God gave his servants power to work, only three of them had the power of causing any one to die—Elijah, Elisha, and Peter; and each of them was honoured to restore life to others who had been dead.

The wisdom of God has presented to us nine examples of the resurrection of the dead, which are distributed with order and proportion: three before the coming of Jesus Christ—three by Jesus Christ himself before his death—three after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Before the coming of Christ, God raised up the son of the widow of Sarepta and the son of the Shunamite, and one who was dead who had been thrown into the sepulchre of Elisha. Jesus Christ, before he died, raised the son of the widow of Nain, the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus. After the resurrection of Jesus Christ, many saints who were in their graves were raised up, then Tabitha, and afterwards Eutychus. There is a considerable resemblance betwixt the three who were raised under the Old Testament, and the three who were raised by Jesus Christ before his death. The first under the Old Testament was the only son of a widow, and the first under the New was the only son of a widow; the one in Sarepta, the other in Nain. In both Testaments God began the resurrection of those who were dead by a demonstration of his mercy, as well as of his power. The last of the three raised up before the coming of Jesus

Christ, had been already laid in the sepulchre, where he touched the bones of the prophet; and the last of the three raised by Jesus Christ, was also raised out of the grave.

Besides the Sabbath of every seventh day, there were also seven annual days in different seasons, in which the law prohibited all servile work. The first and the seventh of the feast of unleavened bread—that of the first fruits—of the feast of trumpets; the first and the eighth of that of tabernacles and that of atonement. All these annual days of Sabbaths are pointed out in the 23d chapter of Leviticus. From the passover to Pentecost, there were also seven days of Sabbaths. But as the actions and the sufferings of Christ are the accomplishment of all that is contained in the Old Testament; so we find, that the Gospel history points out seven Sabbaths which the Lord signalized by the miracles which he performed on these days. The first of these was signalized by the case of one possessed with a devil, and of other sick persons, Mark i. 21; Luke iv. 31. The second, by that wonderful case of a man who had been paralytic for 38 years, John v. The third, by the case of him who had the withered hand, Luke vi. 6. The fourth, by the case of several sick persons, notwithstanding the unbelief of the Galileans, Mark vi. 1. The fifth, by a miracle, till then unheard of, of a man blind from his birth receiving his sight, John ix. The sixth, by another miracle peculiar to the Messiah, of a woman bowed down during 18 years, and delivered from her affliction, Luke xiii. 10. The seventh, by restoring health to one who had the dropsy, Luke xiv. 1. Thus, in Jesus Christ we have the perfection of the Sabbath,

sanctified by acts which had never been seen before in the same light.

Those who fasted miraculously fed others miraculously. Moses caused the manna to descend, Elijah multiplied the oil and the meal of the widow, and Jesus Christ multiplied the loaves which satisfied several thousand men. Each of these three who thus fed others, passed forty days and forty nights without being fed by any other person. Elijah and Moses fed others before fasting themselves; but Jesus Christ fasted before he fed others; and his miraculous fast preceded all his other miracles.

There are six examples of sleep being followed by miraculous acts, namely, three under the Old Testament, and three under the New. 1. Adam being asleep, God out of him formed Eve. 2. Elijah, when he awoke, travelled forty days and forty nights, without intermission. 3. Jonah, after sleeping, remained alive three days and three nights in the whale, and came forth safe. Under the New Testament: 1. Jesus Christ, being awakened, stilled the tempest; the presence of Jonah endangered the ship in which he was, but the presence of Christ saved the ship which was in danger; and that is the only time we read of Jesus Christ sleeping. 2. Peter, in the prison, being awakened, was delivered by an angel. 3. The sleep of Eutychus was followed by his death and restoration to life. In like manner, their resurrection will follow the sleep of death in all those who shall be found in that state at the last day.

The first miracle after the creation of the world, was the translation of Enoch to heaven. The last miracle will be the translation to heaven of all belie-

vers. God has thus shown by the commencement of miracles what will be their close.

At the illustrious occurrence of the transfiguration of the Lord, there were present, 1. Some who were living, and must die—the three apostles; 2. One who had been dead and returned to life—Moses; 3. One who never had died, and who had ascended bodily to heaven—Elijah; 4. One who must die, and return to life, and ascend bodily to heaven—Jesus Christ. There was present a man come from heaven, three men who still lived on earth, and a man come from under the earth. Thus the glory in which the Lord then appeared, had witnesses from all parts of the universe, viz., from heaven, from earth, and from under the earth, that is, from the grave. This was a prelude of the exaltation of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee shall bow, of those in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth.

In the history of the New Testament, the examples of those who were put to death in the cause of God, even including the little children, are as follow:—1. The infants at Bethlehem, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ the great martyr, Stephen, James, Antipas. Each of these martyrdoms was followed by the resurrection of one or many dead persons. After a martyrdom happens a resurrection, and after another martyrdom another resurrection, and so on always alternately, although there be intervals of time and other occurrences. So that from the martyrdom of the children of Bethlehem, no martyr has followed another without a resurrection having intervened. After the martyrdom of the children at Bethlehem, although a long time after, but in which no other

martyrdom had occurred, the resurrection of the young man at Nain, and of the daughter of Jairus, took place. After the martyrdom of John the Baptist came the resurrection of Lazarus in Bethany. After the martyrdom of Jesus Christ, not only his own resurrection, which was peculiar to him among all the martyrs, but also the resurrection of many saints. After the martyrdom of Stephen, the resurrection of Tabitha. After the martyrdom of James, the resurrection of Eutychus. But there is one great and remarkable exception; for the last of all the martyrs pointed out in the New Testament, Antipas was not followed by any one who rose from the dead. This martyr, then the last of all, differs in this from all the preceding ones. Is this not to inform us that there is yet a resurrection in order to accomplish this parallel of martyrs, and those who were raised up, namely, the last resurrection, in which Antipas himself, and all the other martyrs who have not yet been raised up, and even all saints shall rise to glory? It is also to be observed, that the New Testament opens and closes with martyrs. John, the first who preached under the New Testament, was put to death for maintaining the truth, and the last death noted in the New Testament is that of the martyr Antipas.

God is exact in the measure, not only of ages, of years, of months and days, but even of hours, which are all brought under the regulation of his sovereign providence. God foretold to the patriarch Abraham, that at the end of 400 years, his posterity should be delivered from the land of Egypt. This prediction was uttered at night, after the stars had begun to appear. Now at the end of the prefixed term in the night, at

the same hour, the time of the bondage of the Israelites expired, when they celebrated the passover, Gen. xv. 13, 18, Exod. xii. 41, 42. The hour too of the death of Christ was marked 490 years before that event took place. The prediction fixed it to the hour of the evening sacrifice, which was that of three o'clock afternoon, and at the end of the 70 weeks of years, at that same hour, Jesus Christ gave up the ghost.

The law noted certain times as remarkable beyond all others. Among the years was that of the jubilee, which returned every fifty years, in which the slaves were set at liberty, and the lands that had been alienated reverted to their original possessors. Among the annual feasts, that of the passover was the first and chief of all the solemnities. Among the days, the Sabbath was pre-eminent. Among the hours of the day, that which we reckon the third after mid-day, in which the evening sacrifice, which closed the daily ceremonies, was offered, by the killing of the Lamb, and in which also the paschal lamb was killed in the annual return of the passover. At all these periods the work of redemption was completed,—in the year of jubilee—at the passover—at the hour of the evening sacrifice—and on the Sabbath, when Jesus Christ lay in the grave all the day.

The calling of Abraham, when God led him out from Ur of the Chaldees,—the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, after having observed the passover, —the decree for the restoration of Jerusalem, declared by the angel to Daniel (ix. 25.),—and, finally, the death of Jesus Christ,—are four points of the highest importance, among which there is a wonderful correspondence. Although separated from each other by a

great distance of time, they all meet on the corresponding day. The Scriptures inform us, that the Israelites departed from Egypt on that very day and night when the 430 years from the calling of Abraham expired, Exod. xii. 41. The day also of the death of Christ, which was that of the passover, corresponds with it; and the same day, according to the best computation, terminated the 70 weeks of Daniel; whence it follows, that they had commenced on the same day, the day on which the decree went forth to rebuild the Holy City. This wonderful correspondence shows us Jesus Christ dying on the same day that Abraham went out of Chaldee,—that Israel went out of Egypt, —and that the decree was pronounced to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Thus the death of the Messiah extends even to the ages which has preceded it, and his day is found in the most brilliant days of the patriarchs.

From the commencement of the baptism of John to the death of Christ, there were five passovers, which correspond with the five days during which the Lamb was kept before being slain. For on the tenth day of the first month they set apart the Lamb, and on the fourteenth they killed it, this was a period of five days. Now, from the time of John the Baptist's opening of the New Testament to the death of Christ, there were five passovers. In the fifth and last, the Lamb of God, whom John had pointed out, was slain. In the Old Testament, the five days, which were accomplished in that of the passover, represented as many passovers as were accomplished in the death of Jesus Christ, after the publication of the New Testament. Jesus Christ died on the day in which he celebrated the passover,

for he celebrated it in the evening, which was the beginning of the sixth day, and he died before the following evening, that is to say, before the commencement of the seventh day. Thus the passover was celebrated at the commencement of the sixth day, and the death of Jesus Christ took place towards the end of the same day; the figure in the evening, the truth in the morning; for, according to the Scriptures, which speak after the order of the creation, the evening and the morning signify a natural day. This concurrence of the passover, and of the death of Jesus Christ on the same day, is very remarkable. But it is obscured by misreckoning, when it is said that Jesus Christ did not die till the day after the passover.

Although the passover was annually celebrated among the people of God, yet the sacred history particularly notes certain passovers memorable beyond the others, which were solemnized at different times. The first is when the Israelites prepared to go out of Egypt, (Exod. xii.); the second is in the wilderness in the year after leaving Egypt, (Numbers, ix.); the third when they were in Canaan, (Joshua, v.); the fourth by Hezekiah, (2 Chron. xxx.); the fifth under king Josiah, (2 Chron. xxxv.); the sixth, after the return from the captivity, (Ezra, vi.) These are the passovers which are signalized in the Old Testament; but the seventh, which is the perfection of all the others, was still to come; and it is that which Jesus Christ celebrated, the last of all, to which immediately succeeded the Lord's Supper. In that last passover the true Lamb of God is seen, who had been prefigured by the preceding paschal lambs. It should also be observed, that Jesus Christ, who celebrated the last pass-

over, had been himself in Egypt, where the first had been observed. As the passover came from Egypt, so Jesus Christ, who is the true passover, was called out of Egypt, (Matth. ii. 15.)

The authority of the Roman empire is introduced at the birth and at the death of Jesus Christ. The edict of Cæsar, who ordered the enrolment mentioned by Luke, served to prepare the place where he was born, and the authority of Cæsar served to procure the death which he must suffer.

Two of the greatest sinners were converted by Jesus Christ himself. The one was converted by him while on the cross, the other after his ascension into heaven. The one entered paradise with Jesus Christ, having died on the same day; the other, before he died, was carried up into paradise. The one did not repent till the last hour of his life in the midst of his punishment, the other after he had been cast down with fear by a voice and a vision from heaven.

Jesus Christ was seen in all the three degrees of his exaltation. He was seen after his resurrection by more than five hundred persons at once. He was seen ascending to heaven by his eleven principal disciples, and finally, he was seen at the right hand of God by Stephen and Paul. These two witnesses were sufficient to publish the third degree of his exaltation, the first and second being supported by the testimony of so great a number of persons. Here we may observe, that the wisdom of God has chosen the first of the martyrs and the last of the apostles to be ocular witnesses of the glory of the Son of God. The one, in the hands of his executioners, died, making this confession, that he saw the heavens opened, and Jesus

standing at the right hand of God; the other, having been an avowed enemy of Jesus Christ, and of those who believed in his name, confessed his having seen him in glory after his ascension. The one is the first who sealed this truth with his blood, the other was the last who was commissioned to publish it, as having seen him after having persecuted him. All the other disciples saw Jesus Christ conversing on earth, but these two alone saw him reigning in heaven.

The first temple was violated by the Jews, who stoned a prophet in it, and the second temple was violated by their attempting to stone in it the chief of the prophets. Both temples became abominable for several reasons, but especially for these two crimes of the same kind. The Jews believe that the principal cause of the destruction of the first temple was the death of Zacharias, whom their fathers stoned in its courts. That temple subsisted, however 260 years after his death. To what cause then will they attribute the destruction of the second temple, which continued only forty years after they attempted in it to stone Jesus Christ? The destruction too of the second temple was more complete than that of the first; for it was not only burnt, as the first had been, but was so completely demolished, that there remained no trace of the building, not even of the stones. It was turned into a ploughed field. In this manner, not only the temple itself disappeared, but also its pavement, the stones of which had been employed in so horrible an attempt.

The above are a few specimens of the numerous harmonies of times, and coincidence of events, that are contained in the Scriptures. Many more might be

given; indeed their number is almost incredible. Is it possible that all these remarkable coincidences in ages so remote, so entirely beyond all human control, and so contrary to all probable calculation, could have happened by what is called chance or accident? They are evidently the effect of premeditated design—parts of a great and consistent plan, to whose developement they all relate, and are subservient. They direct our attention to the unremitting agency of Him, who goeth by us but we see him not, who passeth on but we perceive him not; on the left hand he worketh, but we cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, but we cannot see him. We go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but we cannot perceive him; yet he causeth even the least of his works to testify of him.

It is our duty to mark these coincidences attentively, and to endeavour to extract from them that instruction, which he who doeth nothing in vain, assuredly intended they should convey. They are calculated to impress our minds with the highest admiration of the wisdom and superintending providence of God, in causing so many remote, and apparently insulated events, to correspond in so remarkable a manner, while the evidence thus afforded to the truth of the Holy Scriptures, proving them to be the work of the same Author, who guided in so many succeeding ages the pens of those whom he employed to write as they were moved by him, amounts to demonstration. They attest at once the unity of the Bible, and the Almighty power of God, in regulating and overruling all events, both the greatest and the most minute, and subordinating them all to his good pleasure, as he hath pur-

posed in himself. That they manifest a regulating power is as clear as that every effect has a cause; and the power that regulated them must be that of the omnipotent all-wise ruler of the world. That the Lord should afford such a kind of proof for the confirmation of the Bible, is quite agreeable to his wisdom in things that are analogous. In pointing out the beast in Revelation, xiii. 18, he describes him under a certain number, and proposes the solution of the question as to its application, as an exercise for the wisdom of men. This is not like a problem to try the penetration and subtlety of the human mind; nor is it a mere gratification of curiosity; either of these objects would be unworthy of divine wisdom. It is that the solution of the question may afford a demonstrative evidence of the truth of the Scriptures. It is intended for the confirmation of the divine origin of the Bible.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE GOSPEL.

THE manifestation of his own glory is the great end of God in creation, and in all his dispensations.*

* God is infinitely more excellent than the whole creation, and viewing things as they really are, he must regard himself as infinitely worthy of being most valued and loved. The manifestation of his glory, then, is the great end of creation, and God has himself chiefly in view in all his works and dispensations. Passages to this effect, both in the Old Testament and the New, far exceed in number what any one who has not examined the subject is aware of.

In the beginning he filled heaven with its angelic inhabitants, and to these blessed spirits were exhibited the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of God. The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. But the weakness and mutability of the creature became apparent; a multitude of the angelic host revolted from their allegiance and rebelled against their Maker; and none but the elect angels, in whom God displayed his almighty power for their preservation, remained faithful. On the occasion of this revolt, the justice of God, an attribute not before displayed, so far as is revealed, was exhibited; the rebellious angels being cast out from their original abode of happiness, and reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day, when justice to the uttermost will be finally and eternally executed upon them.

By the creation of this world, the perfections of the character of God were to be further illustrated, and another attribute of the Godhead was to be displayed in accordance and harmony with those before discovered. Man was created upright, but soon fell from his integrity. This second revolt was occasioned by the Prince of the rebel angels. And now God exhibited mercy in combination with justice, in a manner of which no created intelligence could before have formed a conception. In extending mercy to fallen men, he caused the wickedness of the seducer to recoil upon himself in a more tremendous punishment; and the conspiracy which this grand adversary had planned for the erection of a new and independent empire, was made to issue in the total subversion of his power, and his own aggravated ruin. God likewise

purposed to manifest his abhorrence of sin, in another instance of its exemplary punishment, by allowing justice to take its course on a portion of that race which had risen up in defiance of his authority. But towards another portion of the same race, the most unlimited mercy was now to be exercised, in combination with the most inflexible justice.

For these ends, the Son of God took upon him the nature of man, appeared in the world, and satisfied Divine justice. By his obedience, and sufferings, and death, he accomplished the plan of redemption into which the holy angels, without being able to fathom all its wisdom and all its glory, desire to look. Those of the human race who were to be made the vessels of mercy, and in whom God was to show forth his power, were not to be restored to that high situation in which they were created, but were to be advanced to a condition infinitely more exalted, commensurate with the dignity of their Divine deliverer. They were destined to repeople heaven, from which so many of its original inhabitants had been expelled; to be raised to the highest honours of glory and immortality, and to be for ever confirmed in that state. But as the Captain of their salvation had been made perfect through sufferings, and had even passed through death before he entered into his glory, so all his redeemed children were in their successive generations to tread the same path, and through much tribulation, and death, to enter into the kingdom of God. And this dispensation, of justice and mercy united, was to continue till their triumphant Saviour should appear in the clouds of heaven as the King of Glory, and after having in their presence adjudged their great seducer

to his final doom, with all his adherents in apostasy, should conduct them to those mansions of everlasting blessedness prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Such are the great ends to be accomplished in the plan of salvation as revealed in the Gospel, through which, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is to be made known *by the church*, the manifold wisdom of God; according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, Eph. iii. 10.

While every other system of religion extenuates what is evil in man, and degrades the divine perfections, the way of salvation proclaimed in the Gospel is adapted to the fallen state of humanity, and gloriously illustrates the character of Jehovah. The Holy Scriptures alone reveal in awful majesty the holiness and justice of God, as well as his goodness and mercy. They proclaim his law in all its spirituality and extent; and, bringing every man to the test of its requirements, charge him as a guilty and condemned rebel, who has neither the means nor the inclination to reinstate himself in the favour of his Creator.

To fix guilt on the conscience of every individual, the Scriptures enter into minute details. They exhibit human nature in every possible way, sometimes in the histories of the best, and sometimes of the worst men—of men of all descriptions, and of every rank in life—of the learned and the unlearned—of the barbarous and the civilized. They not only treat of outward conduct, but penetrate into the most hidden recesses of the heart, showing that, even where outwardly a man's conduct appears fair and blameless, all within may be hollow and corrupt. "Out of the heart of

men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." Such is the catalogue of evils which the Holy Scriptures represent as lodging within the heart, and which, coming from within, defile the man. But, above all, they teach his total alienation from God. Hence the evil heart of unbelief. Thus, all men, ever since the fall, are, without exception, sinners. As born of Adam, who was overcome by Satan, and imbibed his poison, they are of their father the devil, who, from his power and influence, is called "the god of this world." Their judgment is perverted, their passions disordered, and, with strong propensities to evil, they have neither the fear nor the love of God. Such is the carnal mind, which "is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." In this condition they cannot please God. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him."

In the Scriptures, the lost condition of man is written as with a sunbeam; it is often explicitly asserted, and everywhere implied. He is declared to be "shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin," Ps. xli. 5—"estranged from the womb, speaking lies," Ps. xlviii. 3—dead in trespasses and sins"—influenced by the devil—by nature a child of wrath, Eph. ii. 3. The character of man in his natural state, as collected from various parts of the Old Testament Scriptures, is fully described in the Epistle to the Romans, where it is applied by the apostle to both Jews and Gentiles. "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They

are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways; the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes," Rom. iii. 10. It is here repeatedly affirmed that there is none,—not one—no, not one, —who is righteous; all have gone out of the way of their natural destination, of their duty to God, and of the road that leads to happiness. All the organs of speech—the throat, the tongue, the lips, the mouth, are employed in the service of sin; uttering corrupt communications, falsehood, calumny, malediction; while the feet carry forward the whole body into actions of cruelty, bloodshed, and wickedness. The truth of this fearful representation has been justified in the history of every age of the world, and is verified in every individual of the human race, however much any one may conceal it from himself, or vainly imagine that to him it is not applicable. As the apostle here commences with the assertion that there are none who understand or seek after God, so he concludes with the declaration, that there is no fear of God before their eyes; whence all this evil originates. "What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold he putteth no trust in his saints; yea the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water." The ruined condition of all men is fully exhibited in Rom. v. 12, 18, where

both their state by nature, and the manner of their being brought into it by the sin of the first man, is declared no fewer than five times. This is afterwards repeated in the 19th verse, in which the entrance and imputation of sin on the one hand, and the entrance and imputation of righteousness on the other, are asserted in language the meaning of which may be resisted, but cannot be misunderstood. "*As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*"

Personal obedience was at first pointed out as the way to eternal life, and is often spoken of in Scripture. "The man that doeth these things shall live by them." But in order to this, he must not be chargeable with the slightest violation of the holy law. As such a condition is altogether unattainable by any of the fallen race of Adam, "for that all have sinned," —Rom. v. 12,—so on this ground no man can attain to eternal life. This was intimated immediately after the fall, when the cherubim, and a flaming sword guarding the way to the tree of life, proclaimed that, by the first covenant, it was no more accessible. But "a new and living way" is now opened. The Son of God declares himself to be "the way, the truth, and the life." "To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." *

* The first paradise in which man was placed was on *earth*, the second to which he shall be exalted is in *heaven*, essentially differing from the other, "Blessed," says the Apostle Peter, "be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inherit-

As, however, the law was originally written on the heart of man, so even after it has been broken, all mankind, like the Jews of old, are still prone to seek justification by means of its righteousness. When, on this principle, the rich young man came to our blessed Lord, and asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life," Jesus answered him according to his folly; but he did so in love, for the purpose of convincing him of his real character,—"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

The law requires that perfect and uniform obedience to its precepts, which no man since the first apostasy ever yielded, while every single transgression subjects the offender to the full weight of its condemnation. In its demands it is inexorable, and admits not of the smallest relaxation; it acknowledges no form or degree of repentance; it pardons nothing, and provides no remedy for the transgressor, or mitigation of its penalty. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in *all things* which are written in the book of the law to do them." "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in *one point*, he is guilty of all." "The soul that sinneth it shall die." The sentence of universal condemnation to man is here pronounced by that law which is holy, just, and good; and from this condemnation no child of Adam can deliver himself; for it is impossible that any creature can be justified by that same law by which he is condemned. No attempt at reformation of conduct can for this end be of any avail; and the

ance *incorruptible*, and *undefiled*, and that *fadeth not away*, reserved in heaven for you." The first inheritance possessed by man differed in all these respects. It might be corrupted, it might be defiled, and it soon faded away.

commandment which was ordained to life, is found to be unto death. Thus, every man born into the world is subject to the precept of the law binding him to perfect obedience as a creature of God, and to its penalty consigning him over to eternal damnation as a transgressor.

Man having thus become a sinner, and subject to all the consequences of sin, God, in his infinite mercy, determined that the whole of mankind should not perish; but that many amongst them should be renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. But all hope of restoration to the favour of God, by any thing that man himself can do, being cut off, how could his renewal after that image be effected? The Scriptures declare that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth." It must be, then, "of God that showeth mercy." But God is just, as well as merciful; he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity. His word, too, was solemnly pledged, that disobedience to his command should be punished with death. Obstacles, therefore, of the most formidable nature, arising from the character of God, from his veracity, his justice, his holiness, stood in the way of man's redemption. But, by a method which only infinite wisdom could have devised, all of them have been overcome, in a manner entirely consistent with every Divine attribute. In this plan of redemption, Jehovah manifests himself as the *just* God and the *Saviour*, Isa. xiv. 21. He could not have been just, if, in saving sinners, he had accepted of an apparent and not a real satisfaction to his justice. But now every transgression receives its merited punishment, and while God remains just he exercises mercy. Christ has be-

come "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him," Heb. v. 9,—and has ratified with his blood the gracious covenant into which he entered with the Father. Received into this covenant, all who believe are delivered from the covenant of works, under which mankind were originally placed, and under which they all continue, till, being regenerated by the Spirit of grace, they are, by faith, united to Jesus Christ, made subjects of his kingdom, and become the children of God. Till then they are subjects of the kingdom of darkness, and under condemnation. But being justified by faith, they have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also they have access by faith into this grace wherein they stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The plan of salvation is equally characterised by justice and by mercy. On the one hand, God exacts to the full amount the penalty incurred by sin, and not one sin that ever was committed shall go unpunished; and, on the other, the most unlimited exercise of mercy is made to harmonize with the strictest regard to justice. Of this no example can be given, except that contained in the gospel. Holy angels had seen and experienced the goodness of God, both in their creation, and in the continuance of their original happy condition. They had observed the justice of God in the punishment of the fallen angels, and in their expulsion from heaven; but never before had they witnessed the combination of justice and mercy, as exhibited in the redemption of man. No parallel to this can be found in the administration of civil governments in this world. When mercy is extended by them to a criminal, the demands of justice are necessarily compromised. It is only in "the

glorious gospel of the blessed God" that "mercy and truth are met together, that righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Justice and judgment are the habitation of Jehovah's throne, mercy and truth shall go before his face.

As the mercy of a perfect being can be exercised only according to justice, grace must reign through *righteousness*, and this righteousness must be provided, in order to accomplish the salvation of a creature totally divested of it. But where was a righteousness available to such an important purpose to be found? It could not proceed from him who had sinned, and through sin had fallen under the curse of the law. No created being could supply it for another. Every intelligent creature, of whatever order, is bound to perform for himself all that the law of God demands. He is required to love God and obey him with all his heart and strength. The just and holy law cannot demand less, and it is impossible that a creature can do more. All his righteousness is indispensably requisite for himself, nor has he the smallest portion beyond this to spare for another. The righteousness, then, in which man is to be clothed anew, could only proceed from God. A righteousness has accordingly been provided, as well as accepted by him. In the Old Testament, God frequently denominates this righteousness, "My righteousness," —connects it with his salvation, and expressly shows, that it is provided for sinners. Isa. xlvi. 12, 13; li. 5, 8; liv. 17. Thus the prophets were commissioned to declare that God's righteousness was near to be revealed, and the apostles testify its actual revelation. Isa. lvi. 1, and Rom. i. 17.

This righteousness, although now only fully revealed,

is not newly discovered. It was intimated in the first promise of mercy; it was more clearly unfolded to Abraham, the father of believers, the example and type of all who are justified, whether Jews or Gentiles; it was prefigured in the ceremonial law, witnessed by the prophets, and at length wrought out and fully displayed in the incarnation, the obedience, the sufferings, and the resurrection of the Son of God.

The righteousness of God is infinitely superior to that righteousness, or conformity to the holy law, which man originally possessed, and infinitely transcends what pertains to angels. It is the fulfilment of the law in its *penalty;* its complete execution; an end which cannot be attained by the punishment of creatures, who, after enduring the longest period of suffering, will not be able to say that they have finished transgression, and made reconciliation for iniquity. It is also the fulfilment of the law in its *precept* by Him who ordained it, and who consequently by his obedience conferred more honour upon the law than it could have received from the obedience of all creatures, who can only yield to it what is due in each successive moment of their existence. But the righteousness which the Messiah has "brought in," Daniel, ix. 24, is "everlasting righteousness," available not only during the time in which it was performed, but through all eternity. No mere creature, nor indeed all creatures together, could in this manner have fulfilled the law, both in its commands and in its threatenings. No one but he who suffered on the cross, ever could say, *it is finished.* In one word, the righteousness provided for man, which will place those who are invested with it nearest the throne, and first in the song of praise, is THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. And

the gospel "is the power of God unto Salvation," expressly for this reason, *because* "therein is the righteousness of God revealed." *

To accomplish this righteousness by fulfilling and honouring the broken law, and to render its imputation to the sinner consistent with justice, God was pleased to assume the human nature into personal union with the divine. He who was in the beginning with God, (marking a distinction in personality), and who was God (denoting the unity), was made flesh, John, i. 1, 14. In his incarnation he was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under its curse, Gal. iv. 4, 5. "Being in the form of God, he took upon him the form of a servant," Phil. ii. 6, 7. His original form was as truly that of God, as his

* "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." The expression is elliptical; it means the righteousness of God, which is received by faith, is revealed to faith—to be believed. The same word in the verse which is translated "from," is, in the last clause, translated "by," and ought to be so in the former clause. There are few, who, when asked the reason why the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, pointedly and promptly answer with the apostle, FOR *therein is the righteousness of God revealed.*

The word rendered righteousness in the above passages, signifies in the original both justice and righteousness. But while both expressions denote conformity to the law of God, there is an essential difference between them. Justice imports conformity to the law in executing it, righteousness is conformity in obeying it, which is the meaning of the word in all the passages here quoted. If these ideas are interchanged or confounded, as they often are, the whole scope of the apostle's reasoning, wherever these words occur, will be misunderstood.

assumed form was that of a servant. His taking upon him the form of a servant incontestably proves, that originally he was not a servant, for how could a servant take upon himself the form of a servant? But had he been the highest super-angelic creature, he must have been both originally and for ever a servant, *infinitely* beneath the Creator.

Invested with the human nature, the Son of God placed himself under the law, and not only obeyed its precepts, but also suffered its penalty, both being necessary for the Redemption of those by whom the law had been broken. Their sins being imputed to him, he endured the punishment due to them, and his obedience being imputed to them, they received the blessing of righteousness,—that blessing of Abraham which was to come on all nations,—and with it a title to its reward. Upon the ground of this transfer of sin and righteousness, the apostle employs these remarkable words. "As though God did beseech men by us; we pray (men) in Christ's stead; be ye reconciled to God, for he hath made him to be sin* for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Thus, the Redeemer "magnified the law and made it honourable" by his complete obedience and by his all-perfect sacrifice; by which he satisfied divine justice, and merited a title to reward. "He finished transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness." He is become the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth,—the end, fulfilling or finishing,—the same expression employed

* Not a sin-offering, as it is often read, but *sin*, as in the English version, which is opposed to *righteousnees*.

on the cross, when he said, "It is finished;" and, again, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

Such is the remedy which God has provided for man. Such is the foundation laid for the free and compassionate invitations of the Gospel. Thus, man having lost *his own righteousness*, God brings near *his* righteousness. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." "Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness. I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off; and my salvation shall not tarry." He that hath no money is invited to come, to buy and eat; yea, "come, buy* wine and milk, without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live. And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people."—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for

* Although the people of God pay nothing for them, the blessings of the Gospel are as completely theirs through faith, as if they had personally paid their full price. Faith unites to the Saviour, who actually did *buy* them. Hence is seen, and ought to be duly appreciated, the propriety and force of this expression, *buy* wine, &c.

I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls." "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Here is "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," and flowing once more into this guilty world.

As in the glory and dignity of the Son of God there is the fullest assurance of his *ability* to save sinners, even the chief—"to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him,"—so these gracious invitations, and every part of his character and conduct, as fully displayed in his history, furnish equal assurance of his *willingness* to receive all who come to him, and to confer on them the most ineffable blessings. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Of this willingness, as well as ability to save, he gave, while he sojourned on earth, a most encouraging and lively representation, in healing the bodily diseases, however malignant and of long standing, of all, without a single exception, that ever applied to him. Yet no proclamation was issued, certifying that their maladies should be healed, like that general proclamation of the Gospel directed to every creature, with the assurance that all who believe shall be saved.

But how shall man, who is a rebel against God, be prevailed on to receive the remedy graciously prepared and infallibly efficacious, but so contrary to his natural pride and rooted enmity against his Creator? Rom. viii. 7. He is wholly alienated from God, through

the ignorance that is in him, because of the hardness of his heart. Eph. iv. 18. His "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," Jer. xvii. 9. "He loveth darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil," John iii. 19. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil," Jer. xiii. 23. "*No man can come to me*," said Jesus Christ, "*except the Father which hath sent me draw him*," John vi. 44, 65. The whole human race must, after all, perish, Rom. ix. 29, if God himself did not interpose and apply the salvation which he has provided; sanctifying as well as justifying the subjects of his grace, and thus making them proper objects of salvation, and meet for the enjoyment of it.

Accordingly God has interposed. He had graciously determined, that, by the knowledge of his righteous servant—by knowing him—*many* should be justified, Isa. liii. 11. In them the Redeemer was to see of the travail of his soul, and to be satisfied. He was to become the Father's servant, to accomplish the work of redemption, and, as it was written of him, he was to come to do the Father's will. On the other hand, the Father declared, that when his soul shall make an offering for sin, he shall see a seed which shall prolong their days; and the gracious purpose of Jehovah shall prosper in his hands. It is added, "I will distribute to him the many for his portion; and the mighty people shall he share for his spoil; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many; and made intercession for the transgressors," Isa. liii. 10, 12. Such is the tenor of the everlasting covenant between the

Father and the Son, by which a numerous seed was *given* to the Saviour, on whom he was to bestow eternal life. Of these he frequently made mention during his ministry on earth. He declares that all that the Father giveth him shall come to him, John, vi. 37. All these were chosen *in* Christ before the foundation of the world, Eph. i. 4. And of them it is said, "Whom he did foreknow, * them he did *predestinate* to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among *many* brethren: moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also *called;* and whom he called, them he also *justified;* and whom he justified, them he also *glorified*," Rom. viii. 29. All these invaluable blessings flow from the "everlasting love" of the Father, and "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," and are conveyed through the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is Jehovah, a person in the self-existent Godhead, equal with the Father and the Son in every attribute. He is called the Spirit, as being

* The foreknowledge of God is mentioned here and in other places, implying the purpose and decree of election. See Acts, ii. 23. Rom. viii. 29. 1 Peter, i. 2. The reason why this word is used to denote the divine determination, is, because the foreknowledge of God necessarily implies his purpose or decree with respect to the thing foreknown; for God foreknows what will be, only by determining what shall be. Therefore his foreknowledge and decrees cannot be separated, for they imply each other, if they be not one and the same. All the foreknowledge of future contingencies is founded on the decree of God, consequently he determined with himself from eternity every thing he executes in time, Acts, xv. 18. Nothing is contingent in the mind of God, who foresees and orders all events according to his own eternal and unchangeable will.

the breather or inspirer of spiritual life. Every thing done by him in this character tends to holiness, and therefore he is called the Holy Spirit. It is his divine office to apply the salvation of Jesus, and to make it effectual. He does all in the heirs of promise. The Father gave them to the Son, the Son redeemed them; but they are in the common mass of corruption dead in trespasses and sins, till the Spirit of life opens their hearts to receive him, enters into them, unites them by faith to the Saviour, and makes them the subjects of a new birth.

Such is the condition of man by nature, that except he be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. This new birth is not a figurative, but a real change. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature," or a new creation. Nor is it a reformation of character in any degree, but the renewal of the image of God in the soul, which had been totally effaced. They who are born again, are begotten in Christ Jesus through the Gospel, being born, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. Thus they are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." For this new birth the man can do nothing to prepare himself. Neither, after he is renewed, can he effect any thing to ensure his perseverance in his new state. The Spirit of God alone both renews and preserves the renewed. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." And "He who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." At the same time, it must be observed,

that the Holy Spirit does not operate in those who are renewed as if they were unconscious machines; he works in them, and they in consequence work by him. It is he who implants, and maintains in them the love of God, but it is they who love God. He works in them to will and to do, and they in consequence both will and do. But without Him they can do nothing.

Those who are thus born again become habitations of God through the Spirit, Eph. ii. 22. They are the temples of the Holy Ghost, 1st Cor. vi. 19. They are living epistles of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, 2d Cor. iii. 3. He carries on his work of sanctification in their souls by means of his word and providential dispensations, through which he gradually enlightens, humbles, purifies, invigorates, and actuates those in whom Christ dwells by faith. They receive the Spirit of adoption, Rom. viii. 15, and the *earnest* of the Spirit—thus distinguished and secured as his own—unto the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30. He leads them, and witnesses with their spirit that they are the children of God; He makes intercession for them, and sheds abroad the love of God in their hearts. In this manner are imparted to the children of God the unspeakable blessings of the New Covenant. And, as man in his natural state, antecedent to regeneration and to the communication of grace, receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1st Cor. ii. 14.); and, as no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, 1st Cor. xii. 3, God gives the Holy Spirit to those on whom he will have mercy, that they may know the things that are freely given to them of God, 1st Cor. ii. 1.

Three covenants have been established by God, or three ways of communication between himself and man. The first was the Covenant of nature, the second that of the law, the third that of the Gospel. Under the first Covenant, man being in a state of innocence, there was no need of a mediator. Under the second, there was a mediator simply of communication, and not of reconciliation,—a mediator as to the exterior,—as a messenger who goes between two parties,—a simple depositary of words spoken on one side or the other, without having any part in the interior or essence of the Covenant, of which he was neither the founder nor the bond. Under the third Covenant, Jesus Christ is the true mediator of reconciliation, who has produced a real peace between God and man—the founder of their mutual communion,—the bond which unites heaven with earth,—and finally the surety both with respect of men towards God, and of God towards men. Moses possessed the external features of a mediator, but Jesus Christ is a mediator in all the extent of the title. Although Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians calls Moses a mediator, yet in another place he affirms that there is but one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; the mediation of Moses was but in appearance and shadow.

God, in making a new Covenant with man, did not re-establish it mutable and liable to be broken like the first Covenant. It was to be established on a supernatural principle. It must be elevated above nature by the merit of a mediator. It was requisite, in establishing an eternal and unchangeable Covenant, that God should love them who belong to it, not with that love with which as Creator he loves his creature, but

even with that love with which he loves his own Son, viewing them in Him, as being the members of his mystical body, and forming one and the same body with Him. John xvii. 23. Hence too it follows, that, as God in the new Covenant was to love his people with a supernatural love, it was proper that they also on their part should love him with a love of the same kind; that is to say, greater and stronger, and more elevated, than that which the first man had even in the state of innocence. For this purpose God has manifested himself, not simply in the character of their Creator, nor immediately to them, but in the face of his Son, in whom they behold Him with an entirely different splendour, and in a form more worthy of their love than he appeared in the first creation. To this may be referred what Jesus Christ said in the institution of the Holy Supper respecting the cup,—"This is the New Covenant in my blood." For not only do these words import that the blood of Jesus Christ is the blood which unites God with man, and which places them in communion; but they also signify, that as in the blood of Jesus Christ, God beholds them far more beautiful and more amiable than they could be in themselves, so they in that same blood behold God infinitely more worthy of all the affections of their heart, that is to say, of their respect—their admiration—their worship —their gratitude—their desire—their love, than they could otherwise view him simply in the way of a natural communication.

The blessings of the New Covenant which God has promised to his people, and bestows upon them, are all provided by himself and imparted by means of their union with Jesus Christ. Addressing the Saints at

Corinth, Paul says—"*Of him* (God) *are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God, is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption.*" 1st Cor. i. 30. Here the completeness of the salvation of believers by Jesus Christ—its source in the sovereign election of God—the special designation of the Redeemer to his office by God,—and the benefits flowing from union with him, are all pointed out. This union, which is fraught with such unspeakable blessings, originates, as we here learn, in the good pleasure of God.

"Of him are ye in CHRIST JESUS." The Scriptures represent Jesus Christ the Messiah to be one person, in whom are united two natures, the divine and the human. A person has been defined to be an individual or agent endowed with intelligence, complete and distinct from every other individual. Hence it appears that the human nature of Jesus Christ, formed according to a supernatural principle, is not a person because its first original destination has been to be joined to another; so that it does not terminate in itself. But in his divine nature Jesus Christ was from eternity a person existing in himself. This is proved by numerous passages of Scripture. Many of these ascribe the incarnation of Jesus Christ and his coming into the world to himself, and expressly prove that his incarnation was purely the effect of his own will. Other passages attribute actions to Jesus Christ before his birth, as when the creation and preservation of all things are ascribed to him, and where he is spoken of as the founder of the church, and as having preached to the inhabitants of the world before the flood. Others declare his pre-existence. And to all of them must be added

that of John, i. 1, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." in which it is clearly and explicitly affirmed, not only that Jesus Christ existed before his incarnation, but that he existed as the Supreme God, being one of the persons in the Godhead.

The eternal Word, then, before his incarnation, was a real person, who was not naturally destined to be joined with the human nature, but who was perfect and complete in himself; and when he was pleased to unite himself with the human nature, he did not by the union of natures become another person, but the person of the eternal Word, remaining the same as he was before, without undergoing any change, has taken to himself the human nature, and has communicated to it his personality. The eternal Word has united and associated it with himself in such a manner, that the qualities, the properties, the actions, the sufferings, the names, and the rights of that nature, should belong to himself; and, on the other hand, he has communicated to it, in the unity of the person, his sovereign dignity, his majesty, and all the rights of divinity. That there is but one person, and that there are two distinct natures in Jesus Christ, is abundantly proved by a multitude of passages of Scripture, and there are few of the prophecies concerning him in which these are not clearly marked.

The human nature of Jesus Christ was taken from the same mass of which the whole human race is formed. As he purposed to have an entire and perfect communion with his people, it was necessary that he should be of the same blood with the rest of mankind. He must therefore be a child of Adam, and conse-

quently, not immediately created by God; for if he had been so, he might have had a resemblance to human nature, but he would not have been of the same substance. God had purposed to destroy the works of the devil, and to destroy sin in the same nature which the devil had infected, and in which sin had extended itself. On this account the Son of God was pleased to assume a body taken from the same mass as the children of Adam, in order that, beginning in his person to re-establish in that mass the purity and holiness of which the enemy had deprived it, he might afterwards communicate sanctification to all his people, in the same manner as ruin had been communicated from Adam to all his descendants. It was necessary, on these accounts, that he should be born of a woman. He did not, however, come into the world as other men do, in virtue of that word of the Creator,—"Be fruitful and multiply," but on a principle superior to nature and in virtue of these words,—"The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." It was worthy of the wisdom of God to distinguish the birth of the Saviour from the birth of other men, and to confer on him, in his first entrance into the world, a supernatural character, since indeed he came by a principle of grace and not of nature. As Satan made use of the woman to introduce sin into the world, God also made use of that sex to introduce everlasting righteousness.

As Jesus Christ designed to bear in his body the punishment of his people's sins, to render divine justice that satisfaction which the work of their salvation required, he appeared in the world in the likeness of sinful flesh. But in his conception, the intervention of the Holy Spirit was required to purify that sub-

stance of which he was formed, and to sanctify it from that secret poison of sin which has penetrated the whole mass of mankind, since the disobedience of the first man. For although the Holy Scriptures teach us that Jesus Christ came into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh, they nevertheless ascribe to him perfect righteousness, declaring that he is holy, harmless, separate from sinners, and that he was made like unto us in all things except sin. As the mediator between God and man must be a divine person, it could not be supposed without blasphemy, that a divine person should not be free from all spot, and perfectly sinless, nor that he should unite himself to a corrupted nature. He must be the source of the Spirit of sanctification, according to what the Scriptures say that we may all receive out of his fulness, and grace for grace;" but how could his people receive that pure Spirit which is to lead them to perfection, if the source from which they drew it were not entirely pure? And not only must he be exempt from all sin, he must also be impeccable, possessing a righteousness so perfect, that he should be incapable of falling into sin. It was one of the causes why the ancient priests could never render God propitious, because they not only offered for the sins of the people but also for their own sins. A mediator who should take upon him to give satisfaction for the sins of his people, must not himself participate in them. In his conception, therefore, by the power of the Holy Ghost,—on account of which it was said, "that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God,"—Jesus Christ possessed, under the veil and appearance of sinful flesh, an entire exemption from sin; that is to say flesh subject

and exposed to all the pains, penalties, and consequences of sin, without, however, the smallest taint of its defilement. He was the Lamb of God—a Lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world. He "knew no sin." "The Prince of this world," saith he, "cometh, and hath nothing in me."

The necessity that the divine and human natures should belong to Jesus Christ, arises from those offices which he came to sustain. As mediator between God and man, these two natures were necessary, that by the one he might have full and complete access to the Father, and that by the other, his people might have familiar access to him. In his prophetical office, he must be God, in order that he might know all the secrets of the will of God; and he must be man, in order to announce them. In his priestly office, he must be man, to humble and to offer himself; and he must be God, to satisfy divine justice: man, to intercede for those whom he redeems; and God, to bless them. In his kingly office, he must be man, to purchase his subjects, for the subjects of his empire are creatures purchased by his blood; and he must be God, to govern them. His satisfaction and merit, which consist in his humiliation, obedience, and sufferings, belong to him as man; but their value depends on the infinite dignity of his person, which could only belong to one that was divine. In his intercession, he must be man, to make request for his people; but he must be God, that he may be infallibly and necessarily heard. In order to be the judge of all, he must be man, to come visibly from heaven, that all men may appear before his throne; but he must be God, to be

acquainted with the works of all, and to execute his sentence. He must be God, to bestow the spirit of sanctification; and he must be man, to give a perfect example for his people to imitate. He must be God, to give them the hope of their resurrection, and elevation to heaven; for it is only by his divine power that they can be raised from the grave, and translated to paradise: but, to give assurance of this, he himself must arise, so that they may be able to say,—We are quickened—we are raised together with him—we are seated in heavenly places with Jesus Christ. In one word, there is nothing in the work of redemption, in whichever of its parts, or in whatever light we view it, in which the necessity of the two natures in the Messiah does not appear. One consequence of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Jesus Christ is, that his human nature is properly an object of the religious worship and adoration of all creatures, not in itself or by itself, but in the person; that is, that the entire person, in which are united the divinity and the humanity, is the object of adoration, since the proper reason, on account of which we adore that person, is his infinite divinity. Another consequence of the incarnation is, that the human nature will be eternally united with the divine.

The humiliation of Jesus Christ did not consist in any loss of his eternal nature; for that nature is inalienable, of which he could not be divested, and which could not be laid aside. But it includes the idea of a certain obscuration which took place in the person of the Son, in respect to that eternal glory with which he was surrounded, consisting in the dishonour and infirmities with which it pleased him to cover himself

in taking upon him our nature. When the Apostle says, that Jesus Christ humbled himself, he teaches us, that what took place in that mysterious economy, was wholly the effect of his own free-will; that it was not a hostile power which had compelled him, but that he himself, of his own good pleasure, entered into that cloud, and wrapped himself up in that obscurity, to conceal the natural splendour of his majesty. When it is said, he made himself of no reputation, or emptied himself, it refers to what appeared in the eyes of men when the Son of God was pleased to manifest himself to them. For, being covered with the veil of flesh, he exposed to the view of the world but few of those rays of divine glory which naturally belonged to him. To judge simply from his outward form, it did not appear that he was the Son of God. The divinity of his person seemed to have emptied or divested itself of that sovereign authority, which rendered him the arbiter of the universe, and no longer made itself manifest. He was, in truth, the Master, the Creator, the Preserver, the Judge and the King of men and angels; but all these adorable titles, if not entirely obscured, were at least for the most part covered with the mean attire of flesh and blood.

For the merit of Jesus Christ we must look to his death, and for this purpose consider it under two points of view,—the first as it is a punishment; the second as it is a voluntary action. In the first aspect, the death of Jesus Christ is a punishment inflicted on him by the justice of the Father. The curse of the law was upon him—as upon the victim which was loaded with Israel's sins. In the second, it must be referred to Jesus Christ himself. He bowed under

no law but that of his own good pleasure, animated with the love which he had for his church. And it is in this second point of view that the Scriptures consider his death, as often as they call it a sacrifice which Jesus Christ has made of himself—or when he says that he offered himself—that he laid down his life for his people; for in this view his death is an act of his own will. And as it was an act of the most profound humiliation that can be conceived—the voluntary abasement of a divine person—that is to say, an act the greatest and most admirable, it necessarily follows that it is meritorious; and since he performed it as the Head and Mediator of his people, it must be meritorious for them. In the first aspect, then, the death of Jesus Christ is a satisfaction to divine justice; in the second, it is their merit.

The death of Jesus Christ could never have been capable of making satisfaction, if it had not been the voluntary death of a person who was independent, and who had his life at his own disposal. This was necessary, in order to render his death and sufferings acceptable to God. For if the punishment of the sins of his people had been endured by a person who was not absolutely master of himself, or by one who had not voluntarily laid down his life, such an atonement would have been altogether unavailable. Jesus Christ had not only to endure the penalty of the law, he had also to fulfil the precept. In order that heaven might be opened for his people, they must, at the same time, be rescued from the abyss in which they were plunged. They required to be delivered from the power of darkness, that they might be translated into God's kingdom of marvellous light. The satisfaction then must

have had a concomitant condition of merit; and, reciprocally, the merit a concomitant condition of satisfaction. The death of Jesus Christ is at once satisfactory and meritorious. Had the righteousness which he wrought not been meritorious, it never could have satisfied justice, and had it not been satisfactory, it never could have possessed any merit.

The wisdom of God shines forth in the incarnation of our blessed Lord, in which he has communicated himself in an ineffable manner to the creature, in elevating man to the throne of divinity above principalities and powers, and in bringing down the divine nature to converse familiarly with man. God has thus become bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; and by this means the divine wisdom has confounded Satan, and repaired the breach made by sin, without, however, compromising the inviolable rights of justice, and has provided every thing necessary for the eternal salvation of those on whom he will have mercy.

"OF HIM are ye in Christ Jesus." The salvation of the gospel, in its origin and progress, is altogether of grace; and it remains solely with God to make choice of those on whom he will bestow the unmerited blessing. If all men were guilty, and involved in condemnation, justice could not require their deliverance; and if for this purpose mercy interposes, it can only act in consistency with justice. But in what way this should be effected, must rest entirely with God. Those, therefore, who are brought into union with Jesus Christ, are made partakers of that blessing by the sovereign election and operation of God, who works all things according to the good pleasure of his will.

God may be considered under two different aspects, either as judging with equity, or as disposing at will of his benefits; or, in other words, as a Judge or as a Sovereign. Under either of these aspects, in whatever manner he acts, having nothing higher than himself, He is the Supreme God. Sovereignty, when this word is applied to the Supreme Being, signifies the exercise of the arbitrary will of a *Benefactor*, because, that under the other aspect, there is no place for the exercise of his arbitrary will. In the exercise of his *justice*, God is sovereign in his judgments and his punishments, but not arbitrary; because he does not judge without demerit in the object of his judgment. When he acts as Judge and Supreme Ruler, his acts are founded upon equity; but when he acts as Sovereign, his acts are founded upon his free favour, and dispensed with wisdom.

It is certain, that however great may be the goodness and the mercy of God, his creatures do not participate equally in them. This is evident by the distinction established between fallen angels and men. The first are entirely given up to punishment, and none are saved; and this without derogating from the mercy of God. Yet there would be as much reason for accusing God of failing in goodness, because he leaves *all* these angels to perish, as because he gives up to punishment *a part* of men. The power of God is determined in its exercise by his sovereign will and divine wisdom; and so also is the exercise of his goodness and his mercy. Mercy, which is a particular kind of divine goodness, is sovereign; and to confer favours freely, but under the direction of the divine wisdom, does injury to no one. If God was *only* just, there

would be no place for mercy. If he never acted as a Sovereign Benefactor, there could be no place for the plan of redemption.

The decree of Election, and the sending of his Son to carry it into execution, were optional with God, and are always spoken of in the Scriptures as flowing from the good pleasure of his will, and being to the praise of the glory of his *grace*. The coming of the Redeemer also, as has been already noticed, was, on his part, voluntary. Even after he took upon him the form of a servant, and came to do his Father's will, his Father appointed that his life should still be at his own disposal. "No man," saith he, "taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." Accordingly, when betrayed into the hands of men, he assured his disciples, that if he petitioned his Father, he would presently send for his deliverance more than twelve legions of angels. This never could have been said had it been in any way derogatory to the character of God to have answered that prayer. In either case, if the Father had not sent the Son, or if the Son had not laid down his life, not one of the human race could have been saved. Yet the destruction of all mankind would have been no just ground for impeaching either the justice or mercy of God, any more than the condemnation without distinction of the rebellious angels.

Of those who are elected by the decree of God, Jesus Christ, as man and mediator, is himself the chief. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." They whom he came to save were, as the reward of his mediatorial work, given

to him by the same decree of election. They were appointed to salvation through him, as he was appointed to be their Saviour. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all." "Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee, as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." This grant of eternal life for his people, was, according to the declaration of Paul to Titus, promised by the Father before the foundation of the world. "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

Jesus Christ, in his last intercessory prayer for his disciples, while he declares that he prays not for the world, refers seven times to those whom the Father had *given* him. These were all chosen in Christ, but not on account of any good thing foreseen in them. All of them were originally in the same condition with Jacob, before he came into the world, concerning whom and his brother Esau it was said, "The children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." The objects of this election are sinners, lying in the same state of sin and death with the rest of mankind, who all would have perished indiscriminately, had not God, who has "mercy on whom he will have mercy," chosen

them to salvation. "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been like unto Gomorrah." (Rom. ix. 29.) "He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (2 Tim. i. 9.)

In his eternal decree, then, by which God hath determined all his works, and every event that shall take place, he has chosen a certain number of mankind to be redeemed, fixing on every particular person whom he will save. Man being utterly lost—guilty, and deserving to be destroyed for ever, his mind being enmity against God, and himself wholly inclined to evil, is entirely dependent on the sovereign will and pleasure of God for salvation. And as God is under no obligation to save any of mankind, it depended on his sovereign will whether any should be saved, and if any, whether all, or a part of mankind; and if only some of them, how many, and the particular persons that should be the subjects of this favour. This election, then, is of God; the motive for it is in himself alone, and cannot in any respect be in the wicked and rebellious creatures whom he saves. The decree of election is SOVEREIGN, UNCONDITIONAL, IRREVOCABLE, and ETERNAL.

The saints are represented in the following passage as coming forth from the source of their eternal election. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath *chosen* us *in* him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame be-

fore him in love: having *predestinated* us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he had purposed in himself; that, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being *predestinated* according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." (Eph. i. 3–11.)

The election of those who are predestinated to the adoption of children, is thus wholly an election of grace, having no respect whatever to their works, for to these they are predestinated. This is explicitly declared respecting the election of the remnant of Israel. "Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." (Rom. xi. 5.) The Christians at Ephesus are addressed in the most decisive language respecting their original ruined and lost condition, and are reminded that they were brought out of it solely by the gracious interposition of God, and that to this cause all that was good in them was to be attributed. "And you hath

he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. ii. 7–10.) Here it is expressly declared that God creates his people in Christ Jesus unto good works, which are the effects of this creation.

The doctrine of election is the foundation of all the great and precious promises contained in the everlasting covenant, and the source of all spiritual blessings, which the people of God ought to contemplate with joyful thanksgiving. And as it is a source of consolation to believers, it is likewise a powerful motive to holiness and obedience, while it imposes on them the most overwhelming obligation to gratitude and the love of God. The apostle Paul makes use of it for this purpose. After dwelling at such length in the

first eleven chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, on the grand doctrines of divine revelation, and last of all exhibiting the sovereignty of God in the election of his people in the clearest manner, and at the same time in a way most offensive to human pride, he looks back on the whole with mingled astonishment and delight. Under the impression of these feelings he exclaims—"O the depth, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Far from judging, as many do, that Christians have no occasion to occupy themselves with such mysteries, he delighted to expatiate on them, he designates them "the mercies of God," on the consideration of which he urges believers to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God; Rom. xii. 1. The doctrine of Election also leads believers to the exercise of the deepest humility, when they remember that God has made them to differ from others who continue enemies to him, and under condemnation, though by nature no worse than themselves. According to this doctrine, their holiness is secured by God himself, who hath predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son; and they are addressed by the apostle Peter as *elect unto obedience*, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Their obedience is thus engaged for and provided by the power and operation of the three persons of the Godhead.

There is nothing, however, in the doctrine of election that supersedes the necessity of using means to arrive at final salvation. The end and the means are

both comprised in the same decree, and in the use of means the decree itself receives its accomplishment. This is strikingly illustrated in the account of Paul's shipwreck. Although God had declared that all in the ship should be saved, it was indispensable for this end that the mariners should remain in the ship. "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." "We are bound," says the apostle, "to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation *through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*." (2 Thess. ii. 13.)

This doctrine is entirely a doctrine of love—of the love of the eternal Jehovah to all those who shall be saved, while in no sense is it the cause of the destruction of those, who, dying in their sins, shall perish. Were it not for the decree of election, not one individual of the human race would be saved. On the other hand, no injustice is done to those, who, not being included in this decree, shall be finally condemned. They remain in the same state in which they would have been had no such decree existed. God, who has mercy only on whom he will have mercy, extending or withholding it according to his sovereign pleasure, ordains them to dishonour and wrath, to be inflicted for their sins, to the praise of the glory of his justice; while those who are saved, are predestinated to salvation, "to the praise of the glory of his grace." The former are vessels of wrath, *fitted* in themselves to destruction; the others are vessels of mercy, whom he had afore *prepared* unto glory; Rom. ix. 22, 23. Mercy must, according to its nature, act freely, and select its objects, otherwise it would be no longer mercy, but

justice. The plan of salvation, therefore, is a plan of mercy conducted according to justice. If sinners obtain the blessing, it must be by free gift. The doctrine of election places God and man in their proper and relative situations. It presents God, as the sovereign disposer of salvation—man, as the dependent and unworthy receiver of a benefit so immense.

Nothing can more clearly manifest the strong opposition of the human mind to the doctrine of the sovereignty of God in the election of his people, than the violence which human ingenuity has employed to wrest the expression, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." By some this has been explained, "Esau have I loved less." But Esau was not the object of any degree of the divine love, and the word *hate* never signifies *to love less*. The occurrence of the word in the expression, "hate father and mother," has been alleged in vindication of this explanation; but the word in the last phrase is used figuratively, and in a manner that cannot be mistaken. Although hatred is not meant to be asserted, yet hatred is the thing that is literally expressed. By a strong figure of speech, *that* is called hatred which resembles it in its effects. We will not obey those whom we hate, if we can avoid it. Just so, if our parents command us to disobey Jesus Christ, we will not obey them; and this is called hatred figuratively, from the resemblance of its effects. But in the passage in which "Esau have I hated" occurs, every thing is literal. The apostle is reasoning from premises to a conclusion. Besides, the contrast of loving Jacob with hating Esau, shows that the last phrase is literal and proper hatred. If God's love to Jacob was real literal love, God's hatred to Esau must be real

literal hatred. It might as well be said that the phrase, "Jacob have I loved," does not signify that God really loved Jacob, but that love here signifies only to hate less, and that all that is meant by the expression is, that God hated Jacob less than he hated Esau. If every man's own mind is a sufficient security against concluding the meaning to be, "Jacob have I loved less," his judgment ought to be a security against the equally unwarrantable meaning, "Esau have I loved less."

Others translate the word in the original by the term *slighted*. But if God had no just ground to hate Esau, he could have as little reason to slight him. Why should Esau be unjustly slighted before he was born, more than unjustly hated? However, those who have a proper sense of the guilt of man by nature, will be at no loss to discern the ground of God's hatred of Esau. Both Jacob and Esau were conceived in sin, and were in themselves sinners, brought forth in iniquity, and transgressors from the womb. Esau was justly the object of hatred before he was born, because he was viewed in Adam as a sinner; Jacob was as justly the object of God's love before he was born, because he was viewed in Christ as righteous.

The passage in Malachi, i. 2—4, from which these words, "Esau have I hated," are quoted by the apostle, as well as all the other places in the Scriptures, both of the Old Testament and the New, where Esau is spoken of—and they are very numerous—incontestably prove what is meant by the expression, "Esau have I hated." "I have loved you, saith the Lord; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved

Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of Hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever." Do these awful denunciations import that God loved Esau only in a less degree than he loved Jacob? When men in such ways pervert the obvious meaning of Scripture, to maintain their preconceived systems, it manifests, not only disaffection to the truth of God, but the most culpable inattention to his plainest declarations.

"If," says Calvin, "we must be brought to the beginning of election, that it may be certain that salvation cometh to us from no other where, but from the mere liberality of God: they who will have this principle suppressed, do niggardly, so much as in them lie, darken that which ought gloriously, and with full mouth, to have been published, and they pluck up the very root of humility. Paul, where the salvation of the remnant of the people is ascribed to free election, clearly testifieth that only then it is known that God doth by his mere good pleasure save whom he will, and not render reward which cannot be done. They which shut the gates that none may be bold to come to the tasting of this doctrine, do no less wrong to men than to God; because neither shall any other thing suffice to humble us as we ought to be, neither shall we otherwise feel from our heart how much we are bound to God. Neither yet is there any other where the sure foundation of sound affiance, as Christ

himself teacheth, who, to deliver us from all fears, and to make us invincible among so many dangers, ambushes, and deadly battles, promiseth that whatsoever he hath received of his Father to keep, shall be safe, John, x. 28. Whatsoever, therefore, is uttered in the Scripture concerning predestination, we must beware that we debar not the faithful from it, lest we should seem either enviously to defraud them of the benefit of their God, or to blame and accuse the Holy Ghost who hath published those things which it is in any wise profitable to be suppressed. Let us (I say) give leave to a Christian man, to open his mind and his ears to all the sayings of God which are directed to him, so that it be done with this limitation, that so soon as the Lord hath closed his holy mouth, he may also block up to himself all ways to enquire further. This shall be the best bond of sobriety, if not only in learning we may follow the Lord going before us, but also when he maketh an end of teaching, we cease to will to learn."

"Of him are ye IN Christ Jesus." Those who have been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, are in their successive generations brought by faith into union with him. In their natural state, as born of the first man, who was of the earth, earthy, and as being *one* with him who sinned and fell under the curse, they are dead in trespasses and sins, and accursed. But being born again by the Spirit of God, they have become *one* with the second man, who is the Lord from heaven; who as a quickening Spirit communicates to them spiritual life, and by his Spirit dwells in them. With Jesus Christ they are thus one spirit. They are also one body with him; he is the Head, and they are the members—members of his

body, of his flesh, and of his bones. He is the foundation, and they are the building. They are as intimately united to him, according to his own expressive figure, as the branches to the vine; and in him they bear fruit, but severed from him they can do nothing. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is sent forth into their hearts, and his petition regarding them is answered, which he offered not for the apostles alone, but for them also who should believe in him through their word, that they all may be one; "as thou, Father," said he, "art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us—that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me."

This union of Jesus Christ with his people consists, then, in their being one with him, and in a mutual representation. Jesus Christ represents them in the act of satisfaction, for he has charged himself with their sins, and appears in their place before the justice of his Father to endure the punishment which they have merited; so that they can with truth say that when he was upon the cross they were in him, that they died with him when he died, and that in the act of his suffering, he and they were one. He represents them likewise in the act of his merit, for it is for them, and in their place, as their head and their mediator, that he has presented to God and his Father that solemn sacrifice, which has acquired for them paradise. He represents them in the act of his resurrection, for he has received from the hand of his Father life and immortality in their place, and as their head, in order that they may enjoy eternal life. He represents them in his blessed exaltation to Heaven, for in the same character he has assumed that eternal glory.

He represents them also in the act of his intercession, since he presents it on their part, and in their name, in the capacity of the head of the Church. This representation results from the will of the Father, who is pleased to look upon believers in the face of Jesus Christ and to view them in him, and from the will of Jesus Christ himself, who voluntarily constitutes himself their head and their surety. It results also from the consent of each believer, who, by faith, takes Jesus Christ for his mediator and surety. Thus, on the part of those who belong to Jesus Christ, the bond of this communion is faith, which is the reason why it is so often spoken of as the recipient of all their blessings.

The union of his people with Jesus Christ consists also in this, that they have one life with him, which is originally in him, and in them in the way of dependence and participation. This spiritual life consists either in present grace or future glory. In grace there are three degrees, of which the first is peace with God; that is, the sense of love which is shed abroad in the hearts of believers, and which may also be denominated consolation, because it is a balm which soothes their sorrows. The second is holiness, which comprehends generally all that constitutes their duty. The third is their hope, which, as the anchor of their soul, penetrates within the veil. In future glory there are also three degrees—the blessed resurrection of their bodies, their elevation to heaven, and the eternal enjoyment of the inheritance of God when they shall be there. This spiritual life is common to them with Jesus Christ, but in such a way as that he is the origin and source of it, and they enjoy it by the communication which he has made of it. It is on this account

that the images which the Scriptures employ to represent this communion of life, are such as those of the foundation with respect to the edifice, and of the head and the members; for the subsistence is common to the edifice and the foundation, but it is the foundation that communicates it to the edifice; force and activity are common to the head and the members, but the members enjoy them from the head.

This union, for which the Redeemer here prays, is a real union, so that Christ liveth in believers, and they in him. They are dead and buried, and risen with him. He was made sin for them, and they are made righteousness in him. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him." He dwells in their hearts by faith, Eph. iii. 17. "As a believer," says Luther, "thou art by faith so entirely united to Christ, that he and thou are made as it were one person. That thou canst not be separated from Christ; but always adherest so closely to him as to be able to say with confidence, I am one with Christ; that is, Christ's righteousness, his victory, his life, death, and resurrection, are all mine. On the other hand, Christ may say, I am that sinner; the meaning of which is, in other words, his sins, his death, and punishment, are mine, because he is united and joined to me, and I to him. For by faith we are so joined together as to become one flesh and one bone." In this manner, Christ is our life, and liveth in us. He is formed in his people, the hope of glory. The apostle Paul desired to be found *in* him, "not having," says he, "mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

"Who OF GOD." As the union of the people of God with Christ Jesus is of God, so it was by him also that this glorious Redeemer was appointed, and invested with the plenitude of all spiritual blessings for their behalf. "*Of God*," therefore, he is made to them the author of these blessings, "for him hath God the Father sealed." Jesus Christ was "set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently"—"I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand—and the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder: so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open." "I have set (anointed) my king upon my holy hill of Zion,"—"I have put my Spirit upon him,"—"I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." At the same time that Jesus Christ calls himself Jehovah, he declares that Jehovah had sent him. "For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants; and ye shall know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah. And many nations shall be joined to Jehovah in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee; and thou shalt know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me unto thee" (Zech. ii. 9). "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek."

Thus Jesus Christ, who in the beginning—from eternity—was God, but who, acting in his Mediatorial office, as the Father's servant, says, "My Father is greater than I," was chosen, set up, qualified, anointed, and sent by God, to be the Redeemer of his people; and in the discharge of his several offices, bestows on them all spiritual blessings. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell."

Jesus Christ is made of God unto us "WISDOM." He is "the wisdom of God," in whom "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." He possesses absolute and unlimited knowledge of all things, in order that from him, as an infinite source of light, may proceed the instructions necessary for all his people in every circumstance of time and place. Hence it follows that he must be God eternally blessed, there being none but God who has a perfect knowledge of all things. He must be infallible, not only respecting what he knows personally, but also in respect to the instructions he gives. He must be incapable of being deceived himself, or of deceiving others. He must also possess infinite goodness, having the will to instruct his people in all things which it is necessary for them to know. The expression, "made unto us wisdom," does not merely signify that Jesus Christ is the teacher of his people, who instructs them in true wisdom; it denotes that he is their sovereign teacher, and the source of wisdom, from which they derive all that belongs to their instruction. "No man," says the apostle John, "hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Jesus Christ in his word, and by his Spirit, makes known the highest and most profound mysteries, into

which angels desire to look. He has revealed the ineffable mystery of the Trinity of persons in one God. He has revealed the mysteries or secrets of the will of God, of which neither men nor angels could have had any knowledge, because they were concealed in his eternal decrees. Such are the mercy of God, or his design to pardon sin—satisfaction to the Divine justice—the ruin of the empire of Satan—the glorious resurrection of the body—the heavenly and eternal paradise—and, in one word, all the other mysteries of the plan of redemption.

Jesus Christ instructs his people as to the way of restoration to the favour of God. All of them are fools and blind by nature, incapable of discerning the things of the Spirit of God, and enemies to God; but by the enlightening influence of the Spirit of Christ, they are convinced of their guilt and inherent corruption, which render them obnoxious to the judgment of God. They are made sensible of their lost and ruined condition, and receive a view of their own character as sinners, such as before they were ignorant of, and as no man ever obtains, but by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. They learn that they are sinners, not in the sense in which to a certain point they always believed this, but in a way and to an extent of which they had not previously any apprehension. They are led to measure themselves, not by themselves, or with other men, but by the standard of the law of God. Like Paul, they were alive without the law once; but the commandment, which is holy, just, and good, having been brought home to them, sin revives, and they die. They perceive that they are not only liable, as they formerly supposed, occasionally to commit sin, but that they are radically

corrupt, sinners both by nature and by practice, and totally unable to relieve themselves from its fearful guilt and power. Their proud imaginations are thus brought down, snd they are led from the heart to adopt the prayer of the Publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

The people of God are at the same time convinced of the love and power of Jesus Christ, and are led to place on him all their dependence for salvation. He opens the eyes of their understanding, shines into their hearts to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as revealed in his face, and gives them an understanding to know him that is true. They are turned from darkness to light, being brought into the marvellous light of the Gospel, and are by his word made "*wise* unto salvation." The question is thus answered, "Where shall wisdom be found?" of which it is declared, that it is not in any thing in the land of the living, it is God only who understandeth the way thereof; Job, xxviii. The fear of God is put into the hearts of those who are united to Christ, which is the *beginning of wisdom.* "Whoever findeth me," saith Wisdom, "findeth life." The children of God thus derive all their wisdom from Jesus Christ, the great Prophet of his Church, who came for the recovery of sight to the blind." "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." "I am," says Jesus, "the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness; but shall have the light of life."

The necessity of a Sovereign Prophet to be made wisdom to his people, appears, if we consider the situation of man without a guide; and that of all creatures,

no one was capable of furnishing them with the instruction necessary for them. For what mere creature could instruct in those things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and that had not entered into the heart of man?" What creature could have presented objects necessary for consolation against the sense of sin, the fear of death and condemnation? What creature could have furnished the true rule of conduct, by which man can judge of things aright, and make a proper choice between what is false and true; by which he ascertains the last end he should propose to himself, and the legitimate means by which to attain it? In this view, it is said in the Psalms, that he who knows not God is a fool; because, in reality, except the revelation of Jesus Christ, there is nothing but folly and error. Jesus Christ brought down from on high, from the bosom of the Father, true wisdom—the wisdom of God, of which God is the author, in the contemplation of which all ought to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

Jesus Christ is made of God unto us "RIGHTEOUSNESS." The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, *for therein is the* RIGHTEOUSNESS *of God revealed.* This righteousness through which the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, is the righteousness or perfect conformity to his law, both in its penalty and precept, which God has *provided* for the salvation of sinners, by imputing it to them. It was *brought in* by his Son, and, therefore, according to the literal translation of the passage, 2 Peter, i. 1, is called the righteousness of Christ. "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious

faith with us, in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute justice and judgment on the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6). Jesus Christ is to his people "the Sun of Righteousness," and for them "the Righteous Advocate."

In themselves, they who are chosen of God are guilty and condemned, without any righteousness of their own; but the righteousness which Jesus Christ as the High Priest of their profession has wrought out, is, through faith, placed to their account. They are thus *justified;* that is, their sins are pardoned, and they are accounted or pronounced righteous by God, as if they had personally fulfilled the law. And here a solution of the momentous enquiry is obtained, "How should man be just with God?" Justification is, in Scripture, opposed to condemnation. "If there be a controversy between men, and they come into judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked" (Deut. xxv. 1). The state of justification, then, into which a man is brought, when, in virtue of his union with Jesus Christ, the righteousness of God becomes his, is opposed to the state of condemnation in which he was born. "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" Justification does not, therefore, imply a change of *character*, but a change of *state*. It is a sovereign *act* of God, and admits of no degrees, but is perfect at once. It is also permanent, being effected

by the imputation of that "*everlasting* righteousness" which the Messiah has brought in, with which those who are united with him are covered as with a robe; Isa. lxi. 10. "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and glory."

Justification is solely by grace. It is "*without law.*" Our obedience has no concern in it—our good works any more than our bad works. "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law." They are the *ungodly* who are justified. Now, "to him that *worketh not*, but believeth on him that justifieth the *ungodly*, his faith is counted for righteousness.* Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness *without works*" (Rom. iv. 5). But although without any work on the part of men, their justification is the effect of the work of their Redeemer. They are sprinkled with his atoning blood, which cleanseth them from all sin, 1 John, i. 7. They are washed in that fountain which is opened to the house of David, and to

* It must not be supposed, when it is said faith is counted *for* righteouness (Rom. iv. 3), that the meaning is *instead* of righteousness. The common translation would be more proper were it unto (εἰς) righteousness, as the same word is rendered, Rom. x. 10,—believeth unto righteousness,—unto the receiving of righteousness. The righteousness by which a man is justified does not, in any sense, belong to his faith, which is only the medium through which the righteousness of God is conveyed and received. By "the righteousness of faith" is meant the righteousness which is received by or through faith. In different parts of Scripture it is said that men are justified by *grace*, Rom. iii. 24; by *the blood of Christ*, Rom. v. 9; by *Christ*, Gal. ii. 17; and *by* or *through* faith, Rom. iii. 28; but never *on account* of faith.

the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness; Zech. xiii. 1. In the righteousness of Jesus Christ they are righteous. In him they have fulfilled both the penalty and the precept of the law. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 3. "Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 4.

No preparation is required to qualify men for justification, which is solely by faith. Every attempt at reformation, for that purpose, proceeds on ignorance of of the existing state of things between God and man. In the Epistle to the Galatians, it is expressly declared, that if a man attempts to *do* any thing to obtain justification, Christ is made of no effect to him; he becomes a debtor to the whole law, and proves that he is unacquainted with the manner in which God justifies the sinner. This equally applies to persons of every character; for all, without exception, are sinners, and the righteousness of God, which is by Jesus Christ, is unto all and upon all them that believe, "for there is *no difference*" (Rom. iii. 22). It is available to every individual of the human race who is united to Christ by faith. Every such person is accounted righteous by the imputation of the righteousness of him who is the "righteous servant" of God. So far from being relaxed or dishonoured, the law of God is thus established in all its force and authority. Its excellence and equity are far more illustrated than they could pos-

sibly have been, either by the perfect obedience of the whole human race, or by the destruction of every transgressor; while God's abhorrence of sin, and his justice in punishing it in the person of his Son, are more awfully displayed than in the punishment of all men.

So far from the justification of a sinner being contrary to the justice of God, it proceeds on the ground of the perfect righteousness of his Son, and illustrates, in a manner the most conspicuous, both his justice and holiness, and vindicates his dealings with men, Rom. iii. 25. In remitting, then, the punishment justly due on account of sin, and pronouncing them, from his high tribunal, not only innocent, free from guilt, but absolutely perfect and righteous, as having fulfilled the law to the utmost extent, God has respect neither to the repentance nor to the subsequent good works of his servants, which could not satisfy his justice, but solely to the work and mediation of his beloved Son. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa. liii. 2). "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. iii. 31). The doctrine of justification is peculiar to the Christian religion, by which it is distinguished from every other form of religion, and from every false system of Christianity. By every scheme of human device, whereby God is supposed to be reconciled to man, and man to God, either by his being satisfied with sincere though imperfect obedience, or by his law, as it is expressed, being mitigated under the new dispensation, that law is degraded, and God ceases to appear holy and just.

Jesus Christ is made of God unto us "SANCTIFICATION." Sanctification being provided for in the

everlasting covenant, and bestowed by God through the Redeemer, is inseparable from justification. Sanctification imports a change of character, as justification imports a change of state. Sanctification provides a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light, as justification gives a title to it. In justification, righteousness is imputed to believers, placed to their account, as if they had personally performed it; in sanctification, righteousness is implanted in them. Their dispositions are changed by the grace of the Spirit of Christ, who, as their king, rescues them from the dominion of Satan, casts down their imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought to obedience to himself. They are thus, according to the predestination of God, conformed to the image of his Son. The sanctification of believers is not, however, complete in this life, as is their justification; it admits of every degree, is progressive, and is not perfected in them till death *. It is, however, that good work begun in the soul, which God will perform until the day of Jesus Christ, Phil. i. 6. Holiness becomes the law of their mind—the commanding principle that regulates their conduct, against which the law in their members—their original depravity—continually wars. The old man in them is crucified, but not slain; and to the end of their lives they are constrained, with the apostle Paul, to experience, that in them, that is, in their flesh, dwelleth no good thing.

Jesus Christ secures the sanctification of his people.

* Sanctification, considered simply as separation to God, admits of no degrees, but is complete as soon as, being born again, a man is separated to his service.

In order that they might hold communion with God it was not sufficient that he had merited for them grace and glory; it was also requisite that he should form in them his own image, since in this consists one of the principal effects of their union with him. Their resemblance to Jesus Christ consists in that life which is common to him and them. On this account, they who are in Christ Jesus possess this character, that they do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. In describing the holiness of the believer, Paul says,—"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." It was indeed impossible that God should make a covenant to give his people the heavenly inheritance, while they remained under the slavery of sin. The two objects of this covenant are the glory of God, and their salvation, which cannot in any respect be separated; and while He engages to do them good, the Lord Jesus engages that they shall glorify Him by a holy life conformable to his will. Jesus Christ sanctifies them by his word and Spirit. The word contains motives that are proper to promote their sanctification, and the Holy Spirit impresses these motives on their souls.

Of the righteousness, then, implanted in his people, Jesus Christ is the origin and the support. The enmity of the carnal mind is removed, the believer in Christ is "*a new creature*," and his heart is purified by faith; all who are united to Christ are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so they also should walk in newness of life. Sin shall not have

dominion over them, for they are not under the law, which, though holy, just, and good, instead of sanctifying those who are under it as a covenant, operates by its restraints to excite the corruptions of the heart; they are under grace, which furnishes new motives, and imparts willingness and strength to obey God. They have become dead to the law by the body of Christ. While under the law, they brought forth fruit unto death; but now their marriage union with the law, as their first husband, being dissolved, they are married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that they may bring forth fruit unto God.

But although dead to the law as a *covenant*, to give them either life or death, believers are still under it as a *rule*. In this view, all of them thankfully receive, and seek to obey it. Having been brought into union with Jesus Christ, they are become capable of serving him. Love takes the place of servile fear. Their consciences are "purged from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. ix. 14). The leading motives of their obedience are love and gratitude; and they are enabled to "serve in newness of spirit," as sons of God, and not in "the oldness of the letter," as slaves. They "have known and believed the love that God hath to them;" and they "love him, because he first loved them." God works in them to *will* and to *do* of his good pleasure. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Ps. cx. 3). God enlarges their heart, and they run the way of his commandments; Ps. cxix. 32. In their sanctification, no constraint is put on the will of believers, their hearts and dispositions being changed. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. iii. 17). "If the Son there-

fore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." (John, viii. 36).

Jesus Christ is made of God unto us " REDEMPTION. He paid the *price* of the redemption of his people, when on the cross he said, " It is finished." They were then redeemed with his precious blood; but they must also be redeemed by his almighty *power*. As their redemption by right was effected by making satisfaction, and that of its application by the exertion of power, so the economy of Jesus Christ is distinguished by two different states, the one of humiliation, the other of exaltation. The ransom price of the redemption of those whom he came to save, was paid by him as their High Priest; but the power by which he rescues them from Satan, from sin, from death, and from the grave, must be effected by him as their King. The exertion of it commenced when he turned them from the power of Satan unto God, and it is continued during the whole progress of their sanctification. But still the combat is not terminated, and their victory will not be complete till he shall appear in the clouds in his glory, and come the second time without sin unto salvation. Their redemption, both in soul and in body, from all the consequences of sin, will be finally effected at the resurrection of their bodies from the grave in the last day; when their Redeemer will present them to himself, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and also to his Father, saying, " Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me;" and when he shall put them in possession of their eternalinheritance. It is for this glorious consummation that the apostle Paul, by a beautiful example of personification, represents the whole creation as " wait-

ing," but in the mean time groaning under the vanity to which it has been subjected by the sin of man. And not only all creation, animate and inanimate, but also the children or God, who have received the first fruits of the Spirit, " even we ourselves," says he, " groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the *redemption* of our body." Then, by the irresistible power of the King of Glory, shall the prison-door of the grave be unbarred: then this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, and the saying that is written shall be brought to pass, death is swallowed up in victory: then the saints being commanded to come forth, their bodies shall be made like unto the glorious body of the Son of God. They shall be clothed upon with their house which is from heaven; Christ shall appoint unto them a kingdom, as his Father hath appointed unto him. They shall eat and drink at his table in his kingdom, and shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

The elevation of his people to the possession of life and heavenly glory, when he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, will be the last act of the economy of Jesus Christ, by which he will finish his reign, having no more to do in the work of Redemption. It may be compared with all his other acts that have preceded it; as with that of his incarnation, that of his death, that of his ascension, and that of the last judgment. In his incarnation, the Son of God took the first fruits of our flesh, and consecrated them to God in his own person. In his death, he satisfied divine justice, and opened a way for us to mercy. In his resurrection, he was made the depositary of life and

immortality, which he had acquired for his people. In his ascension, he is gone to take possession of celestial glory in their place, and has put himself in a situation to communicate it to them. At the last judgment, he will deliver them fully and completely from the power of their enemies. But the last act of their elevation to heaven will be the consummation of the whole work. Then they shall no longer be only consecrated to God by the first fruits of the flesh, as by the incarnation. Then it will no more be a redemption simply by right, as in the death of Jesus Christ. It will no longer be merely a deposit of their life, to be hid with Christ in God, as in his resurrection. It will not be any longer simply a possession of heaven in the person of their Head, as in his ascension. It will not any more be only a deliverance from the hand of their enemies, as at the last judgment. It will be a full and perfect communion of the whole church with God, on account of which the apostle says that then God will be all in all.

Of the nature of that glory of which the people of God shall be put in possession in the day of their redemption, we cannot form a clear and distinct idea. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." In the present state, believers, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. This transformation, while they see only through a glass darkly, is gradually proceeding; but when they shall see face to face, and shall know even as they are known, this image shall be perfected. Their blessedness will con-

sist in a knowledge of God and his mysteries, a full and exquisite sense of his love, ineffable consolation, profound tranquillity of soul, a perfect agreement and harmony of the soul with the body, and of all the powers of the soul among themselves; in one word, in an assemblage of all sorts of blessings. These blessings will not be measured in the proportion of the creatures who receive them, but of God who confers them, and of the dignity of the person of Jesus Christ, and of his merit,—of his person, for they shall obtain that felicity only in virtue of the communion which they have with him—of his merit, for he has acquired it by the price of his blood. As far, then, as we can conceive of majesty, of excellency, and of glory in the person of the Redeemer; so far, keeping always in view the proportion of the creature to the Creator, ought we to conceive of the value, the excellence, and the abundance of the eternal blessings which he will bestow upon his people. The Scriptures call it a fulness of satisfaction; not a fulness of satiety, but a fulness of joy at the right hand of God, where there are pleasures for evermore. It will be a crown of righteousness; they shall sit down with Christ on his throne, as he is set down with his Father on his throne. Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb!

As to the duration of this blessedness, it shall be eternal. But why eternal? Because God will bestow it upon a supernatural principle, and consequently upon a principle free from changes to which nature is exposed, in opposition to the happiness of Adam, which was natural. Because God will give it not as to hirelings, but as to his children in title of inheri-

tance. "The servant," or the hireling, says Jesus Christ, "abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever." Because God will confer it as a donation, that is to say, in a manner irrevocable. On this account, Paul declares that "eternal life is the gift of God." None of the causes which produce changes will have place in heaven;—not the inequality of nature, for it shall be swallowed up in glory—not sin, for it will be entirely abolished—not the temptations of Satan, for Satan will have no entrance there—not the mutability of the creature, for God will possess his people fully and perfectly.

Jesus Christ, then, who was set up by God as Mediator, and as the Surety of the new covenant, is made by Him the source of all spiritual and celestial blessings to those who, by the sovereign appointment of his Father, are united to him. The work of the Mediator comprehends three particular offices, namely, those of Prophet, of Priest, and of King: which may be considered either together or separately. Viewing them together, it may be observed, that these offices perfectly correspond to the three evils to which men are exposed. For we are surrounded with the darkness of ignorance and error, which Jesus Christ dissipates by the light of his prophetical office. We are deprived of the love of God, covered with his malediction, and objects of his displeasure; all which is remedied by the priesthood of Jesus Christ, who reconciles us to God, and exalts us to the honour of his adoption. We are under the power of sin, of sorrow, and of death, from which we are unable to free ourselves; and for this Jesus Christ provides, in the character of the King of his Church.

These three offices correspond to the three things

which are necessary for completing the salvation of his people. The first is, that they be purchased for himself, which Jesus Christ does in virtue of his priestly office; the second is, that he be revealed or manifested to them, which is effected by him in his prophetical character; and the third is, that he be actually communicated to them, which he effects in his office as a King. As their Prophet, he is their wisdom, and enlightens and instructs them. As their Priest, he is their righteousness, and offers for them his one sacrifice; he intercedes for them, he blesses them. As their King, he is their sanctification and redemption, he subdues their enemies, protects, sanctifies, and finally glorifies them; and as they have borne the image of the earthly, they shall also bear the image of the heavenly. All these blessings, conveyed to sinful men through the mediation of the Son of God, are pointed out in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the sum of the new covenant with the house of Israel is given: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Here he acts as their King. "And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." Here, as their Prophet, he illuminates them by his Spirit. "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Here the atonement of Jesus Christ as a Priest, procuring full pardon of his people's sins, is referred to. The whole of this covenant is a promise or engagement on the part of God, without any stipulation to be performed on the part of man. Such,

then, is the manner in which all these blessings are conveyed by God to his people; and they are so conveyed, expressly for the purpose that no flesh should glory in his presence; but that, according as it is written, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

The three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, are the greatest, or rather the only great dignities which are to be found in the church. God anciently conferred them on his people Israel, to whom he often sent his prophets. He established also among them a priesthood, and he himself was the King of that people, to whom he afterwards gave kings when they asked them. But there is an essential difference between the prophetical, the priestly, and the kingly offices, anciently established among the Israelites, and the same offices in the person of Jesus Christ. The ancient prophets were not the source of the divine revelations which they communicated; they were only the channels of conveyance. Jesus Christ, on the contrary, is the source of divine illumination. The prophets revealed mysteries that did not respect themselves; the mysteries that Jesus Christ reveals, regard himself, for his prophetical office consists in manifesting himself only, for by this he manifests the whole of the Godhead. "*Philip*," saith he, "*he that hath seen me hath seen the Father*." The priesthood of Aaron was but a shadow of the truth of that of Jesus Christ; and the kingdom of Israel was only an earthly and temporal kingdom, in place of which the kingdom of Jesus Christ is celestial and eternal.

Of these offices, it may be observed, that according to the order of nature, the priesthood of Jesus Christ

is the first, the prophetical office the second, and the kingly office the third. But if we consider the order of intention, the kingly office is the first, then the priestly, and lastly the prophetical. If again we regard the order of their execution, Jesus Christ commenced by the discharge of the prophetical, he followed it with that of the priestly, and finished with that of the kingly office. He began by preaching the Gospel,—some time afterwards he died,—and then rose again and ascended to heaven, where he sits at the right hand of God to reign eternally.

Jesus Christ was solemnly installed in his office of prophet by his baptism, and by the victory he obtained over the temptation of the devil in the wilderness. He was solemnly inaugurated in the office of priest, on the night when he was in the garden of Gethsemane, when, after having instituted the Holy Supper, he had delivered the discourse recorded in the Gospel of John, which he concluded with that intercessory prayer for himself, for his disciples, and for all his people, till the end of time. He was solemnly installed in his office of king, in his glorious ascension to heaven.

Jesus Christ, in his priestly character, in his acts regarding his Father, whether in satisfying, in meriting, or in interceding, never employs instruments or second causes ; in these he always acts immediately by himself. But in his prophetical office, he does employ them. The reason of this difference is, that the acts of his priesthood being performed to God, must necessarily be perfect in order to be accepted, and, consequently, they cannot be performed by any mere creature, because the weakness and imperfection of the creature would corrupt the act, and render it incapable of being accepted.

But it is otherwise in his acts as a prophet. As they are performed to the creature, it is not necessary, in order to their producing their effect, that they possess an entire perfection; and this being the case, Jesus Christ employs the ministry of second causes.

Every spiritual blessing is thus treasured up in Jesus Christ, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." "I am," saith Jesus Christ, "the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." He is the way to the Father, as a Priest; the truth, as a Prophet; and the life, as a King. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." To these explicit declarations there is no exception. It is only by receiving Christ, that any man can be saved. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

When a man is thus by faith united to Christ, he discovers, according to its measure, the glory of his person as the child born, and the mighty God, Emmanuel, God with us. He beholds him as the Almighty Saviour, who has received a name which is above every name, and is constituted the head of all principality and power, so that nothing in the universe can defeat his purpose of saving those whose redemption he has undertaken, who put their trust in him. The suitableness of the Gospel to his ruined state is discovered by the believer. His

alienation from God during the whole of the previous course of his life, even when his conduct appeared unblamable, is perceived by him to be most heinous and aggravated. He receives a clear and affecting view of the natural depravity of his heart, and of the deadly nature of sin in its root and origin; but all this being now viewed in the light which is reflected from the cross of Christ, although it humbles, does not discourage him. He sees that God has said in his word, "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips" (Hosea, xiv. 1, 2). "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. i. 18). "I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever; only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God" (Jer. iii. 12, 13). "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah, vii. 18, 19). On these declarations of God's own word he rests, and they bring comfort to his soul. "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom" (Job, xxxiii. 24). He relies on this ransom, he flees for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before him; which hope he has as

an anchor* of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and he is filled with all joy and peace in believing.

Although justification be solely by faith, and till a man be justified he can do nothing acceptable to God; yet from that time good works, in other words, obedience to God, are indispensable. On this the Scriptures uniformly insist, and declare that these works will be appealed to at last as the evidence of justification. They shall be "judged every man according to their works." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."—"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."—"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?"—"Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."—"If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."—"They that are

* "An anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." This is a very expressive figure. The anchor which holds the ship steady while the winds and waves beat upon it, is firmly fixed in the ground, but, being covered by the billows in the deep waters, is unseen. Hope, in the same way, has its firm hold within the veil, which conceals its object to which it clings, and keeps the believer steadfast amidst the storms and troubles of life, pointing always, as the ship, to where the anchor is fixed. An anchor, besides, is often used for bringing a ship forward; and the hope of the Christian has not only the effect of keeping him steady to his object, and from being broken off, but also, according to this use of an anchor, of his advancement and progress towards it.

Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."—"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."—"Every one of us shall give account of himself to God."—"For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."—"I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God,—and they were judged every man according to their works."

Between such declarations, and those which prove that salvation is all of grace, and that men are not saved by works of righteousness which they have done, but "according to the mercy of God, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Tit. iii. 5, there is no contradiction. The great end of the Gospel, as it respects God, is to glorify him, by illustrating his perfections of wisdom, holiness, justice, and mercy, in restoring his image to the soul of man, and, as it respects man, to bring him back to obedience and communion with God. It cannot be imagined, that although a man makes his son his heir,—not on account of his obedience or good works, but as being his son, that the son is therefore freed from all obligation to obey his father. Can it be supposed, then, that because a man is freely pardoned on account of what Christ has done, and is adopted as a son of God, he has thus obtained liberty to continue in sin, and is relieved from the duty of obedience to his Creator? Can it be supposed, that the blood of the Redeemer has been shed to give a man a license to persevere in his rebellion against God? On

the contrary, additional *obligations* are imposed on him, and new motives of the most powerful description, to serve God are presented. He has been ransomed with the price of blood, brought from a state of condemnation and misery, has received a free pardon, is adopted into the family of God, has been made an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ of a most glorious inheritance. Shall we then continue in sin, that grace may abound? "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Nothing can free the creature from the obligation of obedience to his Creator.

But besides these additional obligations laid on the believer, and new motives presented to him to bring forth the fruits of righteousness and obey God, his obedience is secured in the most absolute manner, by the indwelling and influence of the Holy Spirit, and the gracious provisions of the Covenant of God. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." "I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from

me." Accordingly the apostle Paul affirms, that they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

The grace of God, then, which provides both for the *acceptance* and for the reward of obedience, is in itself in every respect *holy*, and its whole tendency is *holy*. It teaches, "that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," in expectation of the full possession of the promised inheritance. Every thing in the Gospel is conducive to the sanctification of him who believes it. The view he has received of the love of God, and of Christ dying for his sins, humbles him, and brings down that proud independence of spirit, which formerly prevented him from submitting to God.

In proportion to his faith, the believer is filled with love and gratitude to God; and being brought to know his proper place, both as a creature and a son of God, he is convinced of the duty and necessity of yielding obedience, in order to the enjoyment of that communion with his heavenly Father to which he has been called by the grace of the Gospel. Two cannot walk together unless they be agreed. And no creature of God can hold fellowship with him, unless he submit to him. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." Ungodly men may turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, but in every respect the Gospel is a doctrine according to godliness. Its language, its tendency, and its operation, is "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD," "As he who hath called you is *holy*, so be ye *holy* in all manner of conversation." Holiness is salvation; it is the restoration of the image of God.

We see, then, the place which the Scriptures assign to good works, and also their source, and that they are fully provided for in the covenant of God. These works proceed from faith. "Without faith, it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." He must believe, not merely that God exists, but that he exists *as he really is;* that is, as he describes himself in his word; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, not in ways of their own devising, but in the way that he himself hath appointed. "No man cometh to the Father," saith Jesus, "but by me. No man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." No man, therefore, before being united to Christ, in his unregenerate state, can do any good work.

From the remains of the law in men's hearts; from their conviction of the existence of a Supreme Being; from an idea of a state of future retribution impressed on their minds, especially when that impression is strengthened by what they have heard from the Scriptures; from a spirit of self-righteousness, and the approval of what is right, in preference to what is wrong; from a strong desire of mutual approbation; from original feelings in their nature, and from various restraints as of regard to character, self-interest, and many such considerations under which their circumstances place them, men, in the use of the natural faculties of their minds, do many things which, viewed only in themselves, are good and praiseworthy actions. But, to constitute an action essentially good, it must not only be good in itself, but must flow from a

proper motive, and be directed to a proper end. An act of justice or benevolence to a fellow-creature is good in itself, and very different from one that is of a contrary description. If it spring from a desire of doing what is right, and with a design to relieve a fellow-creature's wants, or to promote his welfare, it is also good in a subordinate motive and end. Still something essential is wanting. A spirit of obedience to God, and a desire to promote his glory, ought, in every thing, to influence all his rational creatures. If, then, the man who has done this action be ignorant of God, and opposed to his true character and perfections, the grand ultimate and indispensable motive and end are both wanting. When strictly examined, it is not essentially a good action. *It is the action of a rebel*, which, under the righteous government of God, never can be acknowledged as good or acceptable, and carries with it its own condemnation. The action of a rebel would not deserve to be acknowledged and rewarded, even by any of the imperfect governments of this world. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, and the ploughing of the wicked is sin. All men before conversion are declared by Scripture to be "ungodly" or wicked. A man's person must be accepted of God before his services can be acknowledged. "The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his sacrifice,"—first to Abel, and then to his sacrifice. When an Israelite was unclean, he was first to be purified, and afterwards he was to present his offering, as the law prescribed; and no man is clean, unless he be cleansed by the blood of Christ, and through the word that he hath spoken. Although, then, a man may have benefited his fellow-creature, and pleased his own

partial conscience,—partial to himself, and partial also in its information,—he cannot be rewarded by God for what he has done. Besides, some hidden evil, pride, vanity, or something similar, may have mixed with this action; and what shall remove its guilt?

But whatever good there might be in such an action, it could at best only answer for itself. It could not expiate former sin and short-coming. Neither can repentance atone for these. Repentance does not avert natural evils which we have brought on ourselves. If a man repent of his past conduct, it may prevent him from repeating the same things, but it cannot alter what is past. If a man spend his fortune, or cut off his hand, repentance will not restore either. If he break the law of the land, repentance will not avert punishment. The offering of sacrifice was a solemn declaration of the conviction of the offerer, that repentance could not remove guilt. But if the best actions of a man before he is reconciled to God, cannot be pleasing in his sight, what must be the case in respect to those many things in which, unless his conscience be seared as with a hot iron, he must condemn himself? "Without me," says Jesus, "ye can do nothing." All works, of whatever description, whether intended as religious duties, or done in the common business of life, by any man before he is united to Christ, are accounted in Scripture "dead works"—evil works, proceeding from those who are dead in sin,—And it is only when the conscience is purged from such works by the blood of Christ, that any man can render acceptable service to him who is the living God. There is a radical difference between what is termed in the world, good morality, and that obedience to

God to which believers are elected (1 Peter, i. 2), and which by the grace of God they are enabled to yield to his commandments and authority. This distinction, essential as it is, is seldom considered ; and by blinding men's eyes so that they do not perceive it, Satan ruins the souls of multitudes.

All good works, then, proceed from faith, and are the fruit of the Spirit which must be manifest wherever the Holy Spirit dwells, and they who have not the Spirit of Christ are none of his. They are the way in which faith acts, exerts, and discovers itself, and by which it is perfected ; James, ii. 22. Believers are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Faith purifieth the heart ; Acts, xv. 9. "Faith worketh by love;" Gal. v. 6. "Faith overcometh the world;" 1 John, v. 4. "The fruits of righteousness, *which are by Jesus Christ*, with which believers are filled to the praise of the glory of God" (Phil. i. 2), are the necessary accompaniments and evidences of faith. "Show me thy faith by thy works." These are truths which all believers ought continually to keep in view ; for while it is solely by the work of the Redeemer, and not by their own works that they are saved, yet they are not saved without good works, if there be opportunity afforded to perform them. Good works are necessary, not to procure a right to salvation, but as the appropriate and indispensable duty of those who are justified and entitled to salvation. They are necessary as an acknowledgment of God's holy sovereignty, and in obedience to his command—necessary for glorifying God before the world—as the end of our election, redemption, effectual calling, and regeneration—as the expression of our gratitude to our great Benefactor—for making our

calling and election sure, and confirming our assurance and hope of salvation—for maintaining inward peace and comfort, though not as their ground or foundation —for maintaining communion with God—for escaping judgments in this life, and enjoying many promised blessings—for adorning the Gospel—for the edification and comfort of other believers—for preventing offence, and stopping the mouths of the wicked, and for commending Christ and his Gospel to their consciences,—in one word, as the fruits and evidences of faith. Though not the cause, good works are the "things that accompany salvation" (Heb. vi. 9)—a main branch of his salvation who is called *Jesus*, because he *saves* his people *from* their sins, who saves both by water and by blood (1 John, v. 6), by removing the pollution of sin as well as its guilt. The disposition and ability to do good works are a part of salvation, and cannot, of course, be in any sense its cause. But it must always be remembered, that the most advanced Christian, while in this state of imperfection, cannot perform a work—a single action—legally good—a work that comes up to the requirement of the law. The good works of the believer, then, while they are indispensably necessary, as well as useful, can never, in any sense, or in the least degree, enter into his justification, or constitute any part of his title to heavenly glory, which is in every sense obtained by inheritance, and not by our purchase.

Keeping this indissoluble connexion between faith and good works in view, they who are justified by faith are by their works manifested to be just; these works being the effect and the evidence of their regeneration, the way by which God conducts his people to glory,

and qualifies them for it. For while the righteousness of God, wrought by Christ, and received by faith, is that on account of which alone men are constituted righteous, the fruits they produce are the token, proof, and requisite effect of union with him, which must be produced to verify it, to manifest its efficiency, and prove their title to the blessing of salvation. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." "Evangelical faith," says Luther, "does not set good works aside, but instructs us not to put our trust in them. It enlightens the conscience, and teaches men the principle on which they are to perform good works, not from servile fear or with a view to justification. Such works are not wrought under the covenant of the law, but of grace; they are the effect of Christ himself working in us by faith, and are therefore as necessary and indispensable as faith itself. It is, however, very useful for sincere and pious persons to know and meditate on Paul's doctrine concerning the contests of the flesh and the Spirit; Rom. vii. It is an admirable comfort to the tempted. When I was a monk, if at any time I happened to feel the motions of a bad passion, I used to think my prospect of salvation was entirely over. I struggled in a variety of ways, both to overcome the bad passion, and to quiet my conscience. All in vain. The lust of the flesh returned, and I was harassed with thoughts of this sort, —'Thou hast committed this or that sin; thou art impatient; thou art envious; in vain hast thou entered into holy orders.' Now, had I rightly understood Paul's doctrine of the flesh lusting against the Spirit, I should not have so long and so miserably afflicted

myself. I should have reflected and said, as I do at this day, in similar situations,—Martin, as long as thou remainest in the flesh, thou wilt never be entirely without sin; thou art now in the flesh, and therefore thou must experience a contest with it: and this is agreeable to what Paul says, the flesh resisteth the Spirit. Despair not thou, then, but strive manfully against all carnal dispositions, and fulfil not their lusting."

Many who are ignorant of the Gospel, suppose that there is a discrepancy betwixt the apostles Paul and James on the doctrine of justification; but there is not the slightest shade of difference. The word justification, as has been already observed, does not signify making just, but accounting just. This is its primary sense in Scripture, and the sense in which the apostle Paul employs it in his illustrations of the doctrine of justification. It is also applied in a secondary sense, referring to the manifestation of justification. In this latter sense the apostle James uses it when he says, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. This he illustrates by the case of Abraham, referring to the occasion of the manifestation of his justified state, when it was said, "Now *I know* that thou fearest God" (Gen. xxii. 12). Nothing was at that time said of his justification before God; but it was then manifested, and the reality of its existence demonstrated by the effects which accompanied it. Thus, as James has observed, the previous declaration of Scripture, referring to Abraham's justification at a period long before, was fulfilled or verified, which said, "Abraham believed God, and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. xv. 6). In the same secondary acceptation,

the apostle Paul also uses the word "justify," when he says of God, "that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings" (Rom. iii. 4); that is, manifested to be just. The result, then, of the doctrines of Paul and James is this—1st, The righteousness of God wrought by Christ, revealed in the Gospel, and received by faith, is that alone by which men are absolved from guilt, and pronounced by God to be righteous. 2d, The fruits of righteousness that are by Jesus Christ, which believers produce, are the proof of the reality of their faith; these clearly evince the truth, that they have received by faith the Spirit which has been promised; they show that those who bear these fruits are united to the living Head, and in consequence they receive the praise and approbation of God, who is glorified by them; and these fruits will be appealed to in the day of judgment, to justify believers against every imputation of hypocrisy, which will be established against all those who *say* they have faith, but have not works.

By the covenant of God, justification and sanctification are inseparable. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." The immediate tendency of the belief of the doctrine of justification, together with that of the other doctrines of grace, is to promote love to God, the principle of all acceptable obedience. The more fully a man is assured, on scriptural grounds, of his justification, the more he will love God, and the more will his heart be enlarged to run the way of his commandments. Every believer is, therefore, commanded to make his calling and election sure, by adding to faith its proper effects. If he makes sure of his calling, he ascertains his election and justification, and

consequently his future participation in the glory that shall be revealed. For *whom* he did predestinate, *them* he also called; and *whom* he called, *them* he also justified; and *whom* he justified, *them* he also glorified. Thus *faith*, *hope*, and *love* accompany each other, and are the grand regulators of the Christian's life. Hope and love spring from faith. Being justified by faith, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Having made this declaration in the beginning of the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle immediately passes to the effects of faith; and as hope derives from these new vigour, it is introduced by him a second time, at verse 4th. Thus the good hope through grace must be *produced* by faith, whence all the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, are produced, and must be *confirmed*, not originally produced, by these fruits. Love, joy, and peace, all proceed from faith. Where there is love there is joy, and where there is joy there is peace; all originating in union with Jesus Christ, from whose fulness of grace they are derived. Joy springs immediately from looking to Christ, in other words, from faith, and the believer rejoiceth in the Lord. This joy is capable of confirmation and increase, in the same way as hope; and he rejoiceth also in the testimony of his conscience,—first in his state, Rom. v. 11,—then in his walk, 2 Cor. i. 12. In one word, the hope of a Christian will bear proportion to his faith, his love to his hope, and his joy to his love. Where one of these is produced, all the others will be produced; where one of them is deficient, all the others will be deficient; and a failure in any of them, will always be found to have originated in want or weakness of faith, which is the root of the whole.

The way to the increase of any grace, is by the increase of faith; and the way to the increase of faith, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is to keep the eye steadfastly fixed on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, and to abound in the work of faith, for the principle is always strengthened by its exercise. Confusion in the mind often arises from not distinguishing between justification and salvation. Believers are all perfectly and for ever justified. In one sense also, in which salvation is often referred to in Scripture, as 2 Tim. i. 9: Tit. iii. 5, they are already saved; but in respect to salvation in its full and final sense, they are saved only in hope; Rom. viii. 24. Being now justified by the blood of Christ, they shall be saved from wrath through him; and their salvation is nearer than when they first believed; Rom. v. 9; xiii. 11. Accordingly, justified believers—those in whom God had begun a good work, which he will carry on to the day of the appearance of Jesus Christ—are called on to work out their own *salvation* with fear and trembling, because it is God who is working in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure. To them that look for him, Jesus Christ will appear the second time without sin,* unto final salvation from sin, and all its consequences, which, as long as they are in this world, and even till the redemption of the body, for which they wait (Rom. viii. 23), is still future.

* Jesus Christ came the first time having the iniquity of his people laid on him, and suffering all its consequences. But having by one sacrifice perfected for ever them that are sanctified, he will appear the second time without sin—their sin which he had taken upon him, and its effects, being for ever done away.

In the representation given by our Lord of the last judgment, it is to be observed, that all the good works of the righteous are such as proceed from "faith which worketh by love;"—"I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat, &c. "Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these *my brethren*, ye have done it unto me." Jesus Christ calls none his brethren but those whom he sanctifieth, who are conformed to his image, and with whom he is one. "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: *for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.*" The Lord, therefore, refers to the fruits of love to his disciples *as such*, which prove their union with him, and consequently their being justified by his righteousness. This love is a decisive test of conversion to God, since an interminable enmity was implanted by God himself between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. But "every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him."—"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Entirely in consistency with this, is the sentence pronounced on those who are condemned—"I was an hungered, and ye gave *me* no meat."

How many who shall be placed at the last day on the left hand of the Judge, will be astonished to find that not one of the works they ever did shall be acknowledged as good! They may have performed many benevolent actions from principles of humanity and sympathetic feeling for distress, and expended large sums in feeding the hungry and clothing the naked; but their works were not, in the true sense, good, because the right motive was wanting. "Ye did it not

to me" (Math. xxv. 45). Doing any work to Christ is the proof of union with him; and in this case the smallest act of obedience to him,—the giving of a cup of cold water only to a disciple, because he belongs to Christ,—is acceptable to God, and shall in no wise lose its reward; Mat. x. 42. The existence, or the want of this union with Christ, of which every man's works shall be appealed to as the proof, will be the ground of acquittal or of condemnation in that decisive day.

All shall be judged on the strictest principles of justice. Those who refused to submit to the government of God shall be condemned, on account of their breaking his holy law. The righteous had also broken it; but they had fled to the refuge set before them in the Gospel, and, confessing themselves to be sinners, and renouncing every idea of their own righteousness, had become "heirs of the righteousness which is by faith." But while their works, which proceeded from faith, are acknowledged as the evidences and fruits of their interest in the righteousness of Christ, it is not *on account* of their works that they are accepted of God and acquitted. The Scriptures declare that men are not *chosen* (Rom. xi. 6), are not *justified* (Rom. iii. 28, iv. 25), are not *saved* (Eph. ii. 9, Tit. iii. 5), *by their works*, or on account of their works; that they are not *saved according to their works* (2 Tim. i. 9); but they uniformly teach that men shall be *judged* according to their works (Rev. xx. 12).

"What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" was asked of the apostle John, when he beheld a great multitude that stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes,

and palms in their hands, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; THEREFORE,—on this account,—are they before the throne of God." In another place, it is said, that it was Jesus Christ who washed them: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." He counsels the church at Laodicea to buy of him white raiment; and what is *bought* from him is "without money and without price" (Isa. lv. 1). These white robes are again said to be *given* to them by Jesus. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were *given* unto every one of them" (Rev. vi. 9). "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was *granted* that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, *These are the true sayings of God*" (Rev. xix. 7). All believers have been chosen to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; and on whomsoever that blood shall not be found at the last day, wrath will fall upon him as certainly as the destroying angel entered that house in Egypt, on the

door of which the blood of the Paschal Lamb was not found.

Notwithstanding the objection so often made, that the doctrine of justification by faith is inimical to good works, the men of the world still entertain a latent idea, that this, after all, is not the case. For it is certain that they judge those who hold that doctrine by a stricter rule than they do others, more narrowly observe their conduct, and, when they act in any respect inconsistently with the law of God, more loudly condemn them. This arises from a conviction, that such acts are inconsistent, not merely with their profession, but also with their principles. It is therefore an involuntary tribute paid to these principles. Christians are very far from being so holy as they ought to be; this proceeds from the weakness of their faith. Still their conduct, on the whole, like that of Noah in building the ark, *condemns the world*, and testifies that its deeds are evil; and this creates more uneasiness in the consciences of sinners, and more dislike to them, than is always acknowledged.

The glorious Gospel of the blessed God is in all respects honourable to his character, and suitable to the circumstances of man. Providing a perfect obedience to the law of God, as well as full satisfaction for the breach of it, the Gospel addresses man as a transgressor, and therefore as already condemned. In this situation, it assures him, that, while in unbelief, he can render no acceptable obedience, and can do nothing to recommend himself to God. "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the pro-

mise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that *believe*."

Had not provision, suitable to men *as guilty*, been made, not one of the human race could have been saved. The Gospel tells man, that sin has cut off all friendly communication between him and his Creator, and that there is only one way in which it can be restored. The mediation of Jesus Christ is that way, which, in making reconciliation, maintains the holiness of God and the honour of his law. If, therefore, men come to God by him, they shall be accepted. They are commanded to come "in the full assurance of faith." They have "boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Christ." But if they attempt to come in any other way,—on the footing of their own repentance, sincerity, amendment, or good works, or partly on these and partly on what Christ has done,—they will be rejected. Those who do not receive the Gospel may regard this as an over-nice distinction, and judge that alternatives so important as eternal misery or blessedness, cannot hang upon it. But it is a distinction of the broadest and most important kind. That faith by which a man comes to God by Christ alone, implies a discernment of things as they really are,—of himself as guilty and *ruined* by sin,—of the spotless purity and infinite justice of God, who cannot look on sin,—of the perfection of his law, and of the perfection of the work of Christ, to which nothing can be added. By the man who attempts to come to God, resting *partly*, in however small a degree, on something in himself, all these realities are changed. A *limitation* is introduced respecting each and all of them; and, consequently, the character of *infinite*,

which belongs to every one of them, is lost. When this is taken away, their nature is radically changed, as much as it would alter the idea of eternal duration, if any limit, however remote, were assigned to it.

On the whole, the salvation of sinners, their election before the foundation of the world, and their predestination to the participation of all the blessings of the covenant of grace, are entirely according to the good pleasure of the will of God, flowing from his everlasting love, and to the praise of the glory of his grace. And all the grace which is dispensed to "the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory" (Rom. ix. 23), is treasured up for them in the person of the Mediator of the new covenant. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth; and of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John, i. 14, 16). The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of truth" (John, xvi. 13); "the Spirit of grace" (Heb. x. 29), who glorifies the Saviour; for "he shall take of mine," said Jesus, "and show it unto you" (John, xvi. 14). The love of God for his people—a sense of that everlasting love wherewith he hath loved them, and therefore with loving-kindness hath drawn them to himself (Jer. xxxi. 3); that love which he has commended to them, in that he gave his Son to die for them—is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them. Hence, as the sum of all benedictions, the apostle's prayer for the Corinthians is, that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost (the communication of those blessings of grace and love, by means

of his presence and sacred influences in their souls), might be with them all.

Redemption, then, the chief of the works of God, is begun, carried on, and completed, by *grace*. Every part of it, from its commencement, in the counsels of eternity, to its ultimate consummation in the everlasting blessedness and glory of the redeemed, when the top stone shall be brought forth with shoutings, crying, "*Grace, grace* unto it," originates in grace, and is applied by grace,—the free unmerited favour of God.* The believer is *elected* by grace, Rom. xi. 5. He is *predestinated* to his adoption, to the praise of grace, Eph. i. 5, 6. He is *called* by grace, Gal. i. 15. He *believes* through grace, Acts, xviii. 27. He has *redemption and forgiveness* by grace, Eph. i. 7. He is *justified* by grace, Rom. iii. 24; Titus, iii. 7. He is, *in all respects, under* grace, Rom. vi. 14. He is *what he is* by grace, 1 Cor. xv. 10. He *serves* God by grace, Heb. xii. 28. He *labours* in the service of God by grace, Heb. xiii. 9. He has his *conversation in the world* by grace, 2 Cor. i. 12. His heart is *established* by grace, Heb. xiii. 19. He is *upheld* by grace, 2 Cor. xii. 9. He is an *heir* of grace, 1 Pet. iii. 7. He has *good hope* through grace, 2 Thess. ii. 16. His *reward* is by grace, Rom. iv. 4. Grace shall be *brought to him* at the revelation of Jesus

* Grace may either be viewed in its *source*, in "the God of all Grace," 1 Peter, v. 10; or in its *manifestation*, Titus, ii. 11, in "the Gospel of the Grace of God," Acts, xx. 24; or in its *operation* in the hearts of men, by "the Spirit of Grace," Heb. x. 24. In the Epistles, grace is uniformly placed before mercy or peace. The order is grace and peace, or grace, mercy, and peace.

Christ, 1 Pet. i. 13. The grace of God *bringeth salvation* to him, and teacheth him, Tit. ii. 11. In one word, he is *saved* by grace, Eph. ii. 5, 8. Such is the operation of grace, in respect to those who are the subjects of it, for whom it was from eternity deposited in their glorious Head. He "hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, *not according to our works*, but according to his own purpose and *grace*, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. i. 9). And by him we have access by faith into *this grace* wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Thus, as sin hath reigned unto death, even so *grace* hath reigned *through righteousness* unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. And he who does not know that *the righteousness of God* is to them that believe a "gift," a "free gift," a "gift by *grace*" (Rom. v. 15, 16, 17), and he who has not received that righteousness, has neither part nor lot in the great salvation. He is a debtor to do the whole law, and is under its curse. He is opposed to the solemn declaration of the Spirit of God, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vi. 23.

The following instance of the conversion of an opposer of the Gospel, is so remarkable, that for the glory of divine grace it ought to be recorded. I know nothing in church history, since the days of the apostles, more illustrative of the power of that grace, and of its visibly instantaneous operation, while its reality has been proved by its effects to the present time.

The pastor of a French Protestant church, near Mar-

seilles, visited Montauban, in the south of France, in the year 1818, when I resided there. On his arrival I was introduced to him, and we immediately entered on the subject of the Gospel. I found him strongly fortified in his opposition to the grace of God; and learned, that, on his journey to Montauban, having heard of the discussions that were agitated there respecting justification, and the way of acceptance with God, he had, in various meetings, entered keenly and even violently into the subject, thinking it his duty to oppose, with all the energy he possessed, such a doctrine as that of justification by faith without works. This question, among many, we fully discussed at our first and subsequent interviews. I had not encountered one who appeared more decidedly hostile to the truth as it is in Jesus, although he was not an Arian or Socinian, but professed to believe in the divinity of Christ. Having met him one evening, I proposed that we should take a walk in the country. We immediately, as usual, commenced a discussion respecting the Gospel, each of us maintaining his own views on the subject. At length, I began to speak on the all-important declaration of the Lord on the cross, "*It is finished*," and endeavoured to show from that expression, that every thing necessary for a sinner's acceptance with God was already accomplished, and that Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth. I had only spoken a few minutes, when it pleased God to shine in his heart, giving him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He suddenly stopped, and with extended arms vehemently exclaimed, "C'EST TROP GRAND POUR ÊTRE VRAI." "It is too great to be true!" From that moment there was no

more difference of opinion—no farther opposition on his part—no more objections. In Christ he was a new creature; old things had passed away; behold, all things had become new. It was now all his desire to hear more of the great salvation. Our conversation, in returning to town, was most interesting and edifying. He remarked, with earnestness, how differently he would preach when he returned to his flock. He confessed, at the same time, that he had often preached on texts in which there was something that he had not fathomed, "*approfondi*," and that now he knew what that was. This is worthy of notice, as it discovers the unsatisfactory state of mind of many, who, professing to preach the Gospel, understand neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. He said, he wondered that his people should have had patience to listen to such a system as he had been endeavouring for seven years to inculcate—so totally different from what he now saw was the doctrine of the grace of God. When we parted, he, who an hour before hated and opposed the doctrine of salvation, was filled with joy and peace in believing.

This happened on Friday. Next morning, he called on me in the same state of mind in which I had left him the evening before, rejoicing in the grace of God; but he said, that being engaged to preach on the Lord's day, he read, after we parted, the sermon he had prepared, and found, that not one sentence of it could he make use of, for it was altogether opposed to what he was now convinced was the truth of the Gospel. He added, that he was utterly at a loss what to do, for he was not accustomed to speak extempore; and that the sermon he had with him, and which he had greatly admired, as so well composed, he would not on any ac-

count make use of. I replied, that I never knew a case so similar to his as that of the jailer at Philippi, and therefore advised him to preach on his question to the apostle, and the answer he received—"What must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." After pausing a few moments, he said he would do so. The place where he preached was at some distance in the country; I therefore was not present, but was informed that his hearers who had known him before, listened with astonishment, wondering that he now preached the faith which so lately he destroyed. He spoke with great feeling and power, and what he said made a deep impression on those who were present. During the short time he remained at Montauban I had several most agreeable conversations with him, and shall never forget his prayer when we parted. I never heard one more affecting. It was evidently the warm effusion of his heart —entirely different from those studied and written prayers used by many of the French pastors. He referred in a very striking manner to his conversion, and to his former and present state; confessed the great sinfulness of his past ministry, and prayed earnestly for himself and his flock.

On his way home he passed through Montpelier, where he preached the same sermon as in the neighbourhood of Montauban. It produced an impression on those who heard him very different from what they had ever received from the discourses to which they had been accustomed to listen. A flame was instantly kindled. The elders of the consistory remonstrated with their own pastor in the strongest manner, demanding of him how he could employ one to preach who

brought forward such doctrines. He affirmed that these doctrines were the same which he himself taught. They denied this most peremptorily, and threatened to denounce him to the government. During more than three months, the greatest agitation prevailed in his church. I saw several letters, which, in the course of that time, he wrote to his friends at Montauban, declaring his apprehension that in the issue he would be dismissed from his charge. At length, however, the storm subsided, and the preaching of the pastor from the neighbourhood of Marseilles appeared to have been useful.

A very different feeling was excited when the account of the conversion of this pastor was carried to his father, a man above eighty years of age. I afterwards saw another pastor, who happened at the time to be at his house on a visit: it was truly affecting, he said, to see the old man quite absorbed in the subject, and for several days going about his house, clasping his hands, and joyfully exclaiming "*Tout est accompli!*" "It is finished!" It is now twenty-one years since the event above narrated took place, and the pastor in question has never wavered in his views of divine truth. I have heard of him at different periods since that time, and learned, with much joy and satisfaction, that he has continued a faithful minister of Jesus Christ.

The sequel of this history is also very interesting. I received the following letter, dated September, 21, 1825, from one of the most zealous and successful pastors in France, of whom I had never before heard. After a general introduction he says, "I address myself to you, to communicate the favourable circumstances in which the Lord has placed me in respect to

the ministry of the gospel, which, by his grace, I exercise. I begin by telling you who I am, and the favours which the Lord has vouchsafed to me. I pursued my first theological studies at Lausanne, in Switzerland; I continued them at the Faculty at Montauban, where I was ordained in 1812. The year after, I was appointed pastor at ——; and about the end of 1817 I became pastor in this place. Till the month of August, 1822, I was only a blind man leading those who were blind. Much external zeal without knowledge—a vain noise of life (*un vain bruit de vivre*), and a profound wretchedness (*misère profonde*), which I did not feel! Such is what I possessed. (*Voila ce que je possedais*). At the above period, I went to visit my former flock at ——, where I saw, after nine years of separation, one of your spiritual children, my old fellow-student." (The pastor above referred to). "He became, in the hand of God, the instrument of my deliverance. I then learned the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh; and, transported out of myself by the joy of my salvation, I returned to my church, where, since then, the Lord has given me grace to render testimony to him, and to advance a little, but very little, in the knowledge of him. In spite of the opposition which the preaching of the Gospel and my imprudent zeal excited in the bosom of my flock; and in spite of my own unfaithfulness and coldness (*mes infidelités et mes glaces*), with which I am often affected, the word has nevertheless produced, and does produce, every day its effects. A goodly number of parishioners confess the Saviour, whose infinite compassion they have experienced; and, in general, all are more seriously attending to the Gos-

pel. I can give you but a faint idea of the field which the Lord has opened before me, and of the progress which the Gospel might make if that field were better cultivated. But I am alone with the Lord. All my colleagues of the department are indifferent (*froids*) about the one thing needful."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE VARIOUS EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THE GOSPEL.

In countries assuming the name of Christian, the profession of Christianity is almost universal; yet the reception which the Gospel actually experiences, and its effects, are very different. By some it is PERVERTED, by others ABUSED, by many NEGLECTED, and by a few openly OPPOSED; but in every age there are those who cordially RECEIVE and obey it, to whom it proves the power of God unto salvation.

One class of persons who profess to believe the Gospel, and imagine that they actually do so, PERVERT and wrest it to their own destruction. They believe that the Bible is a book divinely inspired, that it contains a revelation from God, and points out to man the way of eternal life; but they misapprehend its truths, and, while much occupied with the subject of religion, their views concerning it are altogether at variance with its reality. They resemble many who witnessed the wonderful works of Jesus Christ, and believed for a while that he was the Messiah; but of

the Messiah they had formed an erroneous idea; and consequently, when they afterwards perceived more of the tendency of his doctrine, they drew back and forsook him. The Jews, in like manner, believed that Moses was inspired, and that the Old Testament Scriptures were the word of God; they therefore trusted in Moses, and were persuaded that in these Scriptures they had eternal life. But they mistook their contents, and the doctrine which Moses taught; the Lord therefore declared, that *they did not believe Moses* in whom they trusted. Agrippa in this sense believed, but, strictly speaking, he did not believe the Prophets. In the same way, Simon Magus and others believed.* In the parable of the sower, all the four descriptions of persons introduced, are represented as believing; but, in the strict sense, only the last of them believed. Accordingly, in the explanation of the parable, these only are said to have *understood* and received the word. In like manner those who pervert the Scriptures, while they believe them to be a revelation from God, misunderstand their meaning, and so do not believe the truth they contain; but, instead of it, have imbibed some fiction of their own imagination. Their religious system is therefore at variance with the word of God; but being conscious that they take the Bible for their rule, they are strongly fortified in their delusion, and highly offended when it is intimated to them that their sentiments respect-

* When a man on whose veracity we depend relates a fact, if we understand him, we believe what he testifies. But if we rely on his veracity, yet misunderstand his meaning, in one sense we believe him, in another we do not believe him, for we do not believe what he testifies.

ing divine truth are erroneous, and consequently ruinous.

The view taken of the Gospel by those who pervert it is, that Jesus Christ having brought all men into "a salvable state," they, by their repentance and reformation, are required to make themselves worthy of salvation, and thus on the footing of "sincere, though imperfect obedience," are to make their peace with God. In this system the whole order of the Gospel is inverted. Something naturally good they suppose exists in their heart, upon which the grace of God, according to their undefined idea of grace, will work, and that when they have done their part, God, as they say, will do the rest. The Gospel is thus converted into a sort of compact or bargain between God and man. Confused and erroneous ideas of the character of God are also entertained by them—of his justice, of his holiness, and of the obligation of his law, which they imagine that, consistently with his character, he may relax and lower to the standard of what they call their imperfection; for "God," they say, "cannot surely demand perfect obedience from imperfect creatures." Their views of sin are consequently inadequate and false; and they attempt to satisfy their consciences by means of religious services and observances. And what means the Mahometan by his lustrations, the Brahman by his austerities, the Socinian by his boasted humanity, and these nominal Christians by their assiduous attendance on the Lord's Supper and other religious ordinances—what do they intend but to obtain justification for themselves before God? "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law."—"He that believeth on me hath

everlasting life." These divine aphorisms are equally rejected by them all. To give all the glory of our justification to God is the peculiar characteristic of his own religion. To exalt the merit of man in one shape or other, forms a part of every false religion in the world.

Such self-deceivers abound wherever the Gospel is preached. They resemble the Jews of old, whose rejection of it the apostle Paul so feelingly deplored, while he bore them witness that they had "a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." "Israel," says the same apostle, "which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone." Such are the self-righteous workings of the depraved human heart. Persons of this description are ignorant of their real condition, blinded and stupified by sin, who, in order to obtain acceptance, dare to present to God an "imperfect," that is, a polluted obedience. They who are thus deluded are led to a false view of justification: to obtain it, they suppose that they must qualify themselves; and then they imagine, that, having become so far good and worthy, God will justify and accept them, partly on this account, and partly on account of the merit of his Son. The obedience of Jesus Christ is in this manner brought in to supply what they suspect to be wanting in their own obedience. And not only do they conceive that in this way they

must enter on the Christian life, but that in the same order they are to proceed in their whole course. That view of justification by faith which the Scriptures present, which, for the acquisition of it, excludes every thing like working, more or less, on the part of men, appears to them foolishness, and as leading to licentiousness. There are other peculiar doctrines of the Gospel that are derided as enthusiastic by some of them (though not by all, as there are various shades of opinions among such professed Christians), or, if such doctrines are held in a certain way, they are perverted from their full and proper import. Some imagine, that when election is spoken of in the Scriptures, only national election is intended; and that whenever the operations of the Holy Spirit are described, it is with reference to his miraculous gifts in the first ages, which no longer apply to Christians. In like manner, they suppose that what is said of the law in respect to justification, refers only to the ceremonial law of Moses. They are of opinion that all men are not in the *same* state of condemnation before they believe the Gospel, and that good and moral people come to be reconciled to God on a different footing from the worst of men such as the thief upon the cross, although the Scriptures explicitly declare that in these respects there is *no difference* among men, Rom. iii. 22.

This false and ruinous system, which changes the Gospel into another Gospel, frequently produces considerable effects on those by whom it is embraced. It leads them, like Herod, when he gladly heard John the Baptist, to do "many things." It is, moreover, often connected with a great degree of strictness of profession of religion, and in this they "resemble the devout

women," of whom we read in the book of Acts, whose form of religion did not prevent them from manifesting their enmity to God by persecuting the apostles. All their religious observances spring from self-righteousness and self-justifying views, and their devoutness from a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. The heart in the mean time remains unchanged; and this ensnaring system, so congenial to the pride and depravity of the human heart, tends not to humble, but to puff up. In one word, the persons here referred to are not under grace, but under the law, and consequently under its curse, and under the dominion of sin. They serve not "in newness of the spirit, but in the oldness of the letter"—in the spirit of bondage, and not in the spirit of adoption. As those described by the apostle, they are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. They are strangers to joy and peace in the Holy Ghost, and amidst all their self-righteous workings and attempts at reformation of conduct, their minds are filled with doubts and darkness. "Were I to work to eternity on the plan of reformation and self-justification," says Luther, in his answer to Erasmus, "I could never find rest to my conscience; for I should never be certain that I had done enough."

Worldly men have discernment enough to perceive that religion of the description above referred to, does not spring from submissive acquiescence in the sovereignty of God, and humbling views of the state of the heart, as deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Accordingly, such views are quite compatible with the friendship of the world, which "is enmity with God." Its professors are one with the people of the world in their maxims and "vain conversation." The

love of the world, in all its most decent forms, possesses their minds. They "are of the world," and any opposition from it on account of the cross of Christ, they never experienced. Nor is it possible to convince them that the declaration of Jesus Christ and his apostles, respecting the opposition which his religion must always encounter from the world, does not exclusively apply to the first ages of Christianity. Not discerning the true nature of the Gospel, they believe that people in general are Christians, because they take the name of Christian, and live in what is called a Christian country. They are greatly offended when this is denied, and exclaim against what they consider to be uncharitable and presumptuous judging. Thus, with a form of religion which imposes on themselves, they remain under the influence of Satan, and at a distance from God.

Those who entertain such views of the Gospel are in general strongly fortified in their self-righteous system. "The strong man armed," keeps their hearts secure; and with much of a form of devotion, none are more opposed to godliness. They are indeed sincere in their perverted opinions, and often plead their sincerity as if that would avail, should they prove at last to be in error. The apostle Paul was *sincere* when he "verily thought" that he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." But when afterwards the Lord had revealed himself to him, he acknowledged that he had been "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." These persons should consider that such is the nature of the Gospel, that what may appear a very small error, either in the way of addition to it, or of inverting the order of any of its parts, will make it void altogether, and involve the

most fatal consequences. The early example of Cain and Abel should prove a warning. Both presented their offering to God. The one approached in faith, according to the order prescribed, in humble acknowledgment of his need of an atonement, and was accepted; the other in the spirit of self-righteousness, without an offering of blood, and was rejected. The earnestness with which the apostle Paul contended against the error that had crept into the churches of Galatia respecting circumcision, ought particularly to be observed. This might seem a small matter, but, like every other erroneous system, it was in effect subversive of the Gospel. Every other system makes void the Divine law, and leaves men guilty and condemned. The Gospel, which exclusively reveals his character, and the effectual remedy for sin which he has provided, is alone capable of reconciling the heart to God. The apostle, therefore, assured the Galatians, that if they were circumcised, Christ would profit them nothing. This would be adding something to the Gospel—something to be *done* by themselves in order to their acceptance with God—and so prove that they did not understand it. With the greatest earnestness, therefore, he warns them against receiving another gospel, which he declares could not be another, and that if either he or an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel than what he had preached to them, he was to be held "accursed."

In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul dwells at large on the Gospel, and fully states those doctrines which are most offensive to the pride of the human heart, and which stand directly opposed to every self-righteous principle. On this account the persons in question are

generally prejudiced against that part of Scripture. They prefer the discourses of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as being, in their estimation, more plain and practical. In this manner they set one part of the Bible at variance with another, not considering that the whole of it is equally the word of God, and that the contents of the four Gospels appear plainer only because the great distinguishing principles of Christian doctrine were not in the period they relate to so fully unfolded. Just before our blessed Lord left his disciples, he told them that he had yet *many things* to say to them; and it was not till after his resurrection from the dead, when the Spirit was poured out,—the great atonement being then made, and every thing perfected, —that he fully instructed them in the nature of his kingdom and doctrine. From that period *Christ spoke by the apostles* (2 Cor. xiii. 3). He himself came not so much for the purpose of preaching the Gospel, as to be the subject of the Gospel.

The following passage of the apostle Peter is often quoted as an excuse for not studying and relishing the Epistles of Paul:—"And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which *things* (referring to the subjects, not to the Epistles) are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." But this passage ought rather to be viewed as a *warning* to all who dislike Paul's Epistles, because they explicitly assert certain truths that are contrary to their preconceived

opinions and actions. Such being "unlearned," that is, untaught or unteachable in the doctrine of Christ (averse to the truth), they wrest, torture, or pervert from their proper meaning these writings, *as they do also the other Scriptures*, to their own destruction. But "they are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge" (Prov. viii. 9).

When read with an humble and teachable disposition, and without improper deference to human guides, the meaning of the word of God is in general very obvious, and the doctrine it teaches is seen to be most graciously adapted to human weakness. The period is now arrived, concerning which, in ancient prophecy, it was foretold that "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days;" when "an highway shall be there; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Many of the learned of this world have stumbled at the writings of Paul; while others, not possessed of their attainments, feed on them, as the word of life. "I thank thee," said Jesus, "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away." Those who garble and pervert the Scriptures, and see very well that there are parts of the word of God, which, according to their obvious meaning, stand opposed to their system, should seriously consider that solemn declaration of Jesus Christ, "Except ye be converted, and *become as little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God."

Another class of persons ABUSE the Gospel. They profess to receive it, but are not walking according to its precepts. Such characters are described in Scripture as having "a form of godliness, but denying its power." "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him." "They are hearers, but not doers of the word." They listen to the Gospel "as a very lovely song," and "sit before God as his people do, and hear his words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." If they do not, like many, deny the sovereignty of God in the election of his people, nor their own depravity and the way of acceptance by Jesus Christ, they, however consider not the holiness of God, and the necessity of conformity to the image of his Son. They therefore turn the grace of God into licentiousness; a mistake which, if persisted in, is equally fatal as that of seeking justification by the works of the law. Both errors manifest that those by whom they are maintained are far from the kingdom of heaven.

That these persons labour under some radical mistake respecting the Gospel, though it may not be possible for others to discover in what it consists, is most certain; for faith and good works are, in the covenant of God, indissolubly connected. The Gospel "bringeth forth fruit in every man, from the day he hears it, and knows the grace of God in truth." Such persons, therefore, do not believe the Gospel, but hold something else that seems to resemble it. Their hearts remain unchanged and unpurified. The love of the world, in one form or other, possesses their minds. They appear to be branches in the true vine, but are not

united to it, and so receive from it no vital nourishment, and bring forth no fruit to perfection. While the true branches are pruned, that they may bear more fruit, these will be cut off and burnt.

This case is explained by the parable of the ten virgins, who are described as all having lamps—a profession of religion and decency of conduct, which made them so much resemble each other, that none of them were suspected by the rest. It is not even said that any of them, till the last, considered themselves to be unsound in their profession. They were all waiting for the Bridegroom, although part of them laboured under a mistake respecting his character. He neither knew them, nor did they know him. While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept,—they were in a state of security—some on solid, and others on false grounds. At length he came ; but five of them, having no oil in their lamps, were not prepared to go forth to meet him. Their profession was vain. They possessed not an unction from the Holy One—the grace of the Spirit,—and consequently were not under grace, but under the law and its curse. The others were admitted to the marriage-supper, while these were excluded. This appears to be a case of the strongest kind. It may seldom happen that such persons do not till the last suspect themselves ; but like the stony-ground hearers in the parable of the sower, they may at one time have had joy from something they believed, and afterwards have rested upon the recollection of that joy, and lulled themselves into false security. Their situation is peculiarly awful. They are not hypocrites, but are self-deceived. Their fatal error, undoubtedly, consists in some self-righteous dependence

short of Christ. Perhaps they trust to the appointed means of edification, and make a righteousness of them, or of their supposed faith and acquiescence in what they conceive to be the Gospel; or it may be, to zeal for some of its doctrines, which, in a certain way, they hold separate from Christ, especially where a general profession of believing the Gospel prevails. To such persons the word of God says, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." It calls on them to attend to the solemn denunciations of wrath against the workers of iniquity, and against those who say, Lord, Lord; but do not the things which he commands. It admonishes them to measure themselves, not by themselves, or by other men, but by the word of God; to give up their false refuges in which they trust, and which have not profited them; and it exhorts them to come to Jesus Christ, to take upon them his yoke, which is easy, and his burden, which is light, and he will give them rest.

Those who NEGLECT the salvation of the Gospel, are such as swim with the tide of the present world; and, wholly engrossed with the business or pleasures of life, give themselves no concern about a future state. In a country where Christianity is generally professed, they take the name of Christians; and in a Pagan or Mahometan country, they would, as a matter of course, and as conducive to their present interest and quiet, profess Mahometanism or Paganism. On them, the Gospel makes no impression; they live without Christ, without God, and without hope in the world. The Scriptures contain many awful warnings to such people, and often expostulate with them on the folly of their

choice, in preferring the vain things of this world to "durable riches and righteousness."

The lamentable state of a man who, forgetful of God, prospers in this world, is thus described (Job, xxi. 7) :— "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?"—"God layeth up his iniquity for his children; he rewardeth him, and he shall know it. His eyes shall see his destruction; and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty. For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?"

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, is peculiarly alarming to those who live without God in the world, and "who mind earthly things." No particular sins are laid to the charge of Dives, only he is represented as taking his portion in this world. He had his good things in this life. He died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment. But it was too late. A great gulf was fixed before him, which would for ever prevent his escape from that

state of hopeless misery. How trifling do the things of time appear, when brought into comparison with the realities of the eternal world! How solemn is the thought, that all must enter into that world! "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up."—"I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them: and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works:—and whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire."—"These shall go away into everlasting punishment."—But, "blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

When warned of their danger, those who neglect the Gospel, in self-defence, frequently resort to the mistaken interpretation of that passage, "Charity shall cover the multitude of sins;" as if, whatever meaning they put on the word *charity* or *love*, it could make any atonement or compensation for sin; and as if the plain meaning of the passage was not this,—that love leads us to cover the faults of others, instead of being ready to expose and rejoice in the detection of evil. Another perverted application of the term *charity* consists in representing it as evinced by esteeming every one to be in a safe state, and walking in the narrow way that leads to life, when there is no evi-

dence that this is the case. This is one of those engines of the god of this world, by which he blinds men's minds, and teaches them to lull one another into fatal security, saying "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." What should we say of a person who insisted that a man in a fever was in good health, or if on the brink of a precipice in the dark, that he was in no danger? Would this be a proof of love? It would be a proof either of total want of discernment, or of total indifference to such a man and all his concerns. Love, where danger is apprehended, is quick in taking the alarm, and in using every means in its power to avert the evil, although instead of thanks, it should meet with repulsion. How common is it also to speak of all who die, as going to heaven as a matter of course; although the Scriptures declare, that "many are called, but few are chosen;" that "strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it!"

Another false maxim, as it applies to the people of the world, is frequently heard,—"Every thing is for the best." Under the government of God, taking the whole into account, undoubtedly this is true. It is also true individually of the people of God, that *all* things work together for their good. But so far is it from being the fact in respect to those "that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," that, except they be converted, every thing will work for their final ruin. How, then, shall they escape, who "*neglect* so great salvation?" By every consideration interesting and alarming to the human mind, such should

be induced to lay to heart the things that belong to their peace, before they be hid from their eyes. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him!"

Persons who OPPOSE the Gospel are generally such as are of a speculative turn of mind, who value themselves on being free from vulgar prejudices. Their opposition does not so often proceed from want of evidence to the truth of Christianity, as on that of the difficulties with which they suppose it to be encumbered, and which, according to the views they have formed of God and of themselves, render it incredible, and unworthy of regard. Thus, by the pride of reason, and through "opposition of science, falsely so called," the god of this world hath blinded their minds, "lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them," It would be well for such persons to consider, that "the whole analogy of nature renders it credible beforehand, that supposing a revelation to be made, it must contain many things very different from what we should have expected, and such as we should be unable to explain and account for. That which affords a sufficient answer to objections against the wisdom, justice, and goodness of the constitution of nature, is its being a system or scheme imperfectly comprehended,—a scheme in which means are made use of to accomplish ends, and which is carried on by general laws. For, from these things, it has been proved, not only to be possible, but also to be credible, that those things which are objected against may be consistent with wisdom,

justice, and goodness, nay, may be instances of them; and even that the constitution and government of nature may be perfect in the highest possible degree. If Christianity, then, be a scheme of the like kind, it is evident the like objections against it must admit of the like answer. Christianity, as a whole, is a scheme quite beyond our comprehension, consisting of various parts, and a mysterious economy, which has been carrying on from the time the world came into its present wretched state, and is still carrying on for its recovery by a Divine person, the Messiah." How vain, then, are objections against a plan so extensive, and of a nature so elevated, of which but a part is seen, because not comprehended! Even human plans, when partially submitted to inspection, cannot be understood.

"What if there should be some incomprehensible doctrines in the Christian religion, some circumstances which, in their causes or their consequences, surpass the reach of human reason; are they to be rejected on that account?—Weigh the matter fairly, and consider whether revealed religion be not, in this respect, just upon the same footing with every other object of your contemplation. Even in mathematics, the science of demonstration itself, though you get over its first principles, and learn to digest the idea of a point without parts, a line without breadth, and a surface without thickness; yet you will find yourself at a loss to comprehend the perpetual approximation of lines which can never meet, the doctrine of incommensurables, and of an infinity of infinities, each infinitely greater or infinitely less, not only than any finite quantity, but than each other. In physics, you cannot comprehend the primary cause of any thing; nor of the light, by which

you see; nor of the elasticity of the air, by which you hear; nor of the fire, by which you are warmed. In physiology, you cannot tell what first gave motion to the heart, nor what continues it; nor why its motion is less voluntary than that of the lungs; nor why you are able to move your arm to the right or left by a simple volition. You cannot explain the cause of animal heat; nor comprehend the principle by which your body was at first formed; nor by which it is sustained; nor by which it will be reduced to earth. You cannot comprehend the eternity or omnipresence of the Deity; nor why he did not make all his creatures equally perfect; nor why he did not create them sooner. In short, you cannot look into any branch of knowledge, but you will meet with subjects above your comprehension. The fall and the redemption of human-kind are not more incomprehensible than the creation and the conservation of the universe: the infinite Author of the works of providence and of nature is equally inscrutable, equally past our finding out in them both."

Such considerations ought to come home to every rational man, and to remind him how little he really knows; and that if, on account of the difficulties which on all hands present themselves, he rejects one thing, he must reject every thing. Is he, then, excusable in rejecting Christianity, because of difficulties which, although they may be paradoxes, are not contradictions; while he makes no account of such difficulties on other subjects, where he finds it for his immediate interest to do so? How shall he answer for this when called at his death to stand before the Judge, and to receive a sentence, which he may be assured will be just, as well as final!

But let no man deceive himself. It is not on account of difficulties that he rejects the Gospel. If it were so, he could not surmount similar difficulties in other cases. It is owing to the evil heart of unbelief rising in rebellion against that awful yet consistent view of the divine Majesty revealed in the Scriptures, and which, if admitted, would lay him low in the dust before God, and compel him to cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" He would not any longer trust to that proud morality according to which he thinks he walks very uprightly, doing justice and exercising benevolence. He may cherish the fond idea of his own goodness, and, measuring himself by others, be persuaded that in many things his conduct is more consistent and proper than theirs; but if he knows any thing of his own heart, and attends to the remains of that law which is written there, he must be conscious, that, even on his own principles, he has *sinned and come short*. Then, what is his refuge? It is only this, "God will not require perfect obedience from an imperfect creature." Here his system exactly coincides with that of those who are Christians only in form. And, in fact, at bottom they are both one. But is he to go into eternity on this precarious ground, "God will not require perfect obedience from an imperfect creature?" By what analogy, or in what possible way, does he arrive at this conclusion? Does not the demand of perfect obedience enter into every idea that we form of a law? Are not law, and obedience to the extent of the law, exact counterparts? Was there ever a law in the world that did not require perfect obedience? And what is the *imperfection* pleaded? Is it any thing but propensity to sin? And shall *that* excuse sin?

The word imperfect is, therefore, here substituted for depraved. For, let it be remembered, that the obedience required of a creature, is in proportion to the power of that creature. The law under which man is placed requires him "to love God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength, and to love his neighbour as himself." There is nothing here required above a man's power, and therefore no ground is left for pleading imperfection in default of obedience. The law is holy, *just*, and good. It requires for God nothing above a man's strength, and for his neighbour nothing beyond what he would do for himself.

When a man commits theft or murder, will the plea be sustained in court that he is an "imperfect creature?" If, then, a man, from not having the fear or love of God, takes his name in vain, or fails to render to him that homage which, as the creature of God, it is his duty to yield,—if he will pay no adequate attention to the evidence which God has given of a revelation of his will, or to understand what his will is, and to obey it, is it reasonable that his plea of imperfection should be sustained by the law of God any more than by the law of man? At any rate, has such a one done all that, according to his own feelings and views as an imperfect creature, it was in his power to do, and that at all times? Has he done as well as he could? On this ground at least, he must confess he is guilty. He should also remember, that openly acknowledged reverence for God, the Universal Sovereign, expressed in outward acts of homage, is laid aside by him. Religion does not enter into his plan of morality; and it is not with him the root from

whence it springs. If, then, he should find at last that the visible expression of love to God, as well as of love to man was required, he will, when it is too late, discover his error, without being able to plead that it was not sufficiently obvious. "The bed is shorter than that he can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." After all vain excuses shall be swept away, and when the disembodied spirit shall stand in His presence before whom all things are naked and open, the sum of the whole, we are warranted by Scripture to say, will be this, "He loved darkness rather than light, because his deeds were evil."

If it should be objected, that, "supposing the influences of the Spirit of God to be necessary, in order to the reception of the Gospel, those who are not favoured with them cannot be to blame for neglecting it." This, it must be replied, by no means follows. Undoubtedly, men are to blame for not at once submitting to God, when he makes known to them his will with such abundant evidence. If, when the truth of the Gospel is set before men, supported by evidence greater and stronger than that which suffices for the daily and hourly concerns of life, rational creatures are not blamable in not receiving it, then no case can be conceived in which men should be blamed. Man's inability to turn of himself to God, is of the same nature with the inability of the confirmed drunkard to become sober. It is moral, not natural inability. Natural inability consists in a defect of a man's mind or body, which is an absolute obstruction in the way of his knowing or doing any thing, though he be ever so desirous of accomplishing it. Natural inability, therefore, can never

render men criminal. Moral inability consists in a disinclination or dislike to any thing so great, that the mind, though acting freely, that is, choosing without any external compulsion or restraint, cannot overcome that disinclination. When this disinclination in a man respects what is good, it cannot be separated from criminality; and in proportion to the repugnance which he manifests, is the guilt with which he is chargeable. All men practically make these distinctions, and judge and act on them towards each other every day. Although, therefore, the propensity of men to stand out in a state of independence against God, which is the very ground of blame, is so great, that it requires divine influence to overcome it, the absence of this influence does not absolve their guilt. Is there no blame when men obstinately act respecting religion in a manner differently from what they do in every thing relating to this life—when they most irrationally fortify themselves against a charge of guilt, which in their consciences they must in some measure admit, and against a threatening of punishment which by their fears they anticipate, while, like Naaman, they spurn at a simple and perfect remedy, because it is mortifying to their pride? Most of these persons must also allow, that while desirous of improving their minds by the acquisition of various kinds of useful knowledge, the study of the nature and evidence of the Christian religion has never seriously engaged their attention. And, after all, can *they* complain of the want of divine influence who deride its existence, and count it enthusiasm,—who conceive that their hearts are not so bad, nor their case so desperate, as to be beyond the reach of their own remedies? By thus denying the ne-

cessity of divine influence, and yet continuing, as *they know* they do, justly chargeable with sin, they condemn themselves. "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

What, then, it may be said, is to be done, in order to obtain salvation by the Gospel? "What must I do to be saved?" "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" This is the explicit answer of an apostle to the above question when put to him; and according to the whole revelation of God, there is no other that can be given to any man in the world, let his character or circumstances be what they may.

To the same purpose the Jews said to Jesus Christ, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" He answered, "*This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*" As soon as this answer was given to the Jews, their immediate reply was, "What sign showest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work?" And this is the very reply that those who continue to oppose the Gospel generally make when called to believe it, "We want evidence of its truth." These Jews had just before abundance of evidence given them, and we may still ask any man who has taken the trouble to examine it, whether there be not sufficient evidence to convince every rational being of the truth and authority of the Christian religion.

But you reply, "The Scriptures do not allow us to make use of our reason, and require us to believe things contrary to reason." Nothing of this kind is

the case, reason itself being judge. What do they require you to believe? They require you to believe that God is holy and just, and that from his nature he must hate and punish sin. Is this contrary to your reason? They require you to believe that the law of God is perfect, and that he commands all his intelligent creatures to obey it. And as this law (than which nothing can be more excellent, and which is the law of *love*) is guarded by sanctions, as every law must be, if they break it, they shall be condemned and punished. Is this contrary to your reason? They require you to believe that you have broken this law, and have come short of its requirements. Do you not *know* that this is the case? They require you to believe, that as you are guilty, so you are condemned to suffer that punishment which is the sanction of God's holy law. Is this contrary to reason? They tell you, that when, from the nature of the case, it was impossible that deliverance should arise from any other quarter, God himself, in a way consistent both with justice and mercy, provided an atonement or covering for guilt, and a perfect righteousness in the person of a voluntary surety or substitute;—a way in which the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness, and which in the most solemn manner demonstrates, that sin and suffering are inseparable, and that holiness is ever the object of his love. And they inform you, that if you will believe that what God has thus declared is truth, and submit to him, you shall have the benefit of all this, and shall be treated as a son of God, who will preserve you from evil, and, delivering you from your present sinful condition, will train you for glory and immortality in

a future state of existence. Is this contrary to reason? Considering the abundant evidence which God has given you, that this message of reconciliation and mercy is from himself, the Scriptures further declare, That "he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." This is not contrary to reason.

But you again recur to the "difficulties," and say, that, along with these things, there are others which your reason will not allow you to believe; such as the mode of the existence of Deity, the incarnation of the Son of God, and that God should have created beings who, he knew, would break his law and be miserable. Do you not perceive, that these are matters of which reason has not sufficient information or even power to judge, and that therefore they are not contrary to reason, although above it? The Scriptures call on you to believe facts, such as the existence of God, and his operations as they refer to you; but they do not require you to believe the *mode* of the existence of Deity, or *how* the divine and human natures are united. And can that man say that these things are contrary to his reason, who *cannot comprehend himself* —the nature of his own soul, or how his soul and body are united; but who yet believes, and must believe, the existence of the one and the union of the others? As to the existence of evil, all the powers of man cannot develope the cause of its introduction, while every one feels its effects, and believes its reality.

Believers in Scripture use their reason in the only legitimate way in which reason can be used,—they judge by reason of what is within the sphere of rea-

son. The Scriptures appeal to reason; but they call on men to judge soundly, and not rashly, partially, or superficially. "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." It is owing to pride and folly, not to reason, that men reject certain things in Scripture because they do not comprehend them, while, from their nature, they are entirely beyond the limits of their reason. We should count that man a fool, who would not warm himself by the fire because he cannot explain *how* the fire burns; or who would not receive food, because he does not know *how* it can be converted into the matter of which his body is composed. What should we say of the man who would not admit that there is any such thing as evil, natural or moral, in the world, because it is *contrary to his reason* that it should exist in the work of a Being infinitely powerful, wise, and good? But perhaps you do not use your reason at all on the subject of religion. Perhaps you are afraid to use it, lest you should discover more than you wish. Perhaps, if you are partial to Mr Hume's writings, you have taken his advice on this subject. "As the violations," says he, "of truth are more common in the testimony concerning religious miracles, than in that concerning any other matter of fact; this must diminish very much the authority of the former testimony, and make US FORM A GENERAL RESOLUTION, *never to lend any attention to it, with* WHATEVER *specious pretext it may be covered.*" Is this according to reason?

Instead of acting rationally in rejecting the Gospel on grounds such as these, you pervert and misapply reason in a manner which, were you to act consistently, would totally unfit you for the business of the

world, and even for the preservation of your life. You scorn to confess yourself guilty, and to come as such to God to receive a free pardon, and a righteousness provided by another. You seek to be justified by the law; but feeling that you cannot come up to its perfection, you bring it down to your own standard, and think to answer its demands by your partial and scanty obedience. In order to satisfy yourself with this view of the matter, you represent God to your imagination altogether such a one as yourself. You form an idea of him which perfectly suits your supposed interests, and low views of rectitude. You admit his goodness and mercy, but divest him of his justice and holiness. Having substituted this imagination for the true God, and set up this idol in your mind, it gives you a certain degree of satisfaction, and so far lulls your conscience, as to enable you, with a tolerable degree of security, to give yourself up to the love of the world in that way which most suits the peculiar character or bent of your mind, whether it be the love of riches, of pleasure or of power. The Gospel, on the other hand, transferring the views of man from this transitory scene, and opposing itself to vanity and folly in every shape, but opening the brightest prospects of future glory, displays the harmonious perfection of the attributes of God. Goodness and mercy are every way conspicuous; but they are exercised in perfect consistency with the most absolute regard to justice and holiness. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, mercy and truth shall go before his face." Seriously consider if this be not rational, and accept of that mercy which the Gospel reveals.

The Scriptures reason with, persuade, command,

and beseech you, to be reconciled to God, in consideration of your helpless and ruined condition, and of that full provision which is made for your recovery. "Now, then," says an apostle, "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech men by us; we pray men, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." After such considerations and entreaties as these, if you still oppose yourself to them, is it not *reasonable* for the same apostle to say, as he did to the Jews, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean." —"Seeing ye put the word of God from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Consider, then, the earnest, pressing, and unencumbered invitations of the Gospel. This free, unmerited salvation, and the willingness and ability of the Redeemer to save to the uttermost, are beautifully illustrated by the case of the thief on the cross. Be assured there was nothing peculiar in his case, in respect to his being accepted of God. The bodily presence of the Saviour made no difference. If, in any circumstances whatever, you apply to Him, he is equally near to save you, and he will save you. And whatever your character may be, if you shall be rescued from final misery, and ultimately brought to glory, it will be on the very same footing on which the crucified robber is now in paradise. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might

have life through his name." "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the only begotten Son of God." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

No previous degree of depravity, ingratitude, rebellion, or forgetfulness of God, through a long life, can disqualify you. No prerequisites on your part, for this salvation, are required, or are possible. The Gospel is adapted for those who are guilty, ruined by sin, and children of wrath. The righteousness which it reveals is a covering, a remedy in all cases, and in every season. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh"—unable to accomplish on account of human depravity, and the sentence of condemnation passed upon man—"God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled" in them that believe. Be not deterred, by the difficulties which still may appear to accompany this doctrine, from the reception of benefits so immense. To require to have all difficulties cleared, "is the same as requiring to comprehend the Divine nature, and the whole plan of Providence from everlasting to everlasting." Many of these difficulties may be referred to your own limited capacity in the present state. What you know not now, if saved from wrath, you shall know hereafter, as far as will be necessary for the enjoyment of complete happiness and glory. In the mean time, it is an important part of your submission to God to give him credit beyond what you can see. Be assured

the Judge of all the earth will do right. You are on the brink of eternity. Without this Gospel, it is in vain for any man to pretend that he is not entirely in the dark with respect to his future condition: Except it be, indeed, that there are certain forebodings in the mind, in regard to the eternal state, and apprehensions that all is not as it should be;—forebodings and apprehensions, which the cares and amusements of life may lull to sleep, but which, on the approach of death, will resume their force.

Consider once more the strength of the evidence of so many various kinds, for the truth of the Christian religion, against which you stake your eternal welfare. For, *if it be true*, those who reject it, cast out from the presence of God, will be miserable for ever. Were a miracle wrought before you, you say you would believe. But many witnessed miracles, yet believed not the truth which these miracles proved. If, however, in a similar situation, you would act more rationally, you have an opportunity of being satisfied. There are prophecies which foretell such combinations of circumstances, at such distant periods, that it is morally certain they could not be what are called fortunate conjectures, and therefore, equally with miracles, indicate Divine interposition. A great body of these has, in the foregoing pages, been brought under your notice. They are not detached predictions, but a system of prophecy extending through thousands of years. Consider, that the book which contains them was translated into Greek nearly 300 years before the coming of Christ, and by that means was in the hands of the whole civilized world. This cannot be disputed. From the effect they produced, it is also beyond dispute, that

these prophecies were sufficiently clear and definite to answer their professed purpose, while the appearance of Jesus Christ is an historical fact.

Consider another remarkable circumstance which has also been brought forward. The prophet Daniel foretold the succession of the *four* great empires of the world; the division of the last of them into *ten* kingdoms, and the rise of another power from the *midst* of them, *diverse* from all the rest, which was to usurp dominion over them, and to be particularly distinguished by religious persecution. This prediction was uttered above 500 years before the Christian era, and while only the first of these monarchies subsisted. Every thing to the present day verifies this prophecy, repeated by Daniel in two different forms, the one as revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the other to himself. We have seen it taken up and amplified by two others of the sacred writers, above 600 years afterwards, as far as it was then unfulfilled. But what is most to the purpose, we have observed by the writings of the early Christians, especially in a public Apology for the Christian religion, in the year 198, that what was then unaccomplished of this prophecy, was understood and plainly announced by them. They declared that ten kings should, on its subversion, share the Roman empire, and that an eleventh power, which they denominated "Antichrist," should overcome them all.

The division of the Roman empire into ten kingdoms actually took place, and an eleventh power, verifying the minute descriptions of the prophecies, and entirely of a different kind from any other that ever has been on earth, arose among them, usurped domin-

ion over them, and to this day, although in its decline, continues to possess extensive power and influence.

Such predictions, so numerous, so well authenticated, so particular, and so clearly explained beforehand, which are *still fulfilling*, and which have stood the test of more than 2000 years, afford a moral certainty of Divine interposition.

Your attention has been turned to the degraded state of the *Heathen World* in respect to religion; the infamous characters of the deities that idolaters feigned to themselves and worshipped; and the impure and flagitious services which they practised, and believed to be acceptable to their gods. We have observed the temporizing and dishonest conduct of the philosophers, who, knowing more than the body of the people, kept back that truth with which they were acquainted, and conformed themselves to the usual religious rites, however degrading and absurd. Nor did they by this means escape the general contamination of manners, which followed from the common perverted ideas of religion. On the contrary, they practised those vices that have so justly stigmatized the most civilized of the ancient nations, while they did not oppose the cruel practices which were adopted for amusement or convenience. Although it was their duty to have been the leaders in whatever is good or praiseworthy in society, they often recommend, by their writings, the very reverse.

The slightest consideration, then, of the moral state of the Heathen world, and the ignorance of the wisest of their sages, of all that is most important to be known, ought to convince any one of the necessity of a revelation from God; while, on the other hand, the good effects which, even in this world, have been pro-

duced by Christianity, are a strong argument in favour of its Divine origin. The banishment of the Pagan religion, with all its train of cruelties and superstitions, so degrading, as well as corrupting to the human mind, must be allowed to be a singular benefit to mankind.

You have seen that the *Genuineness* and *Authenticity* of the Scriptures are established by evidence the most unexceptionable. Whoever refuses to receive them as authentic, must give up all reliance on history, and equally reject other writings, received by every one without the smallest hesitation, but which are not supported by proofs nearly so strong, so direct, or so numerous, as those that belong to the Sacred Volume.

The claim of *Inspiration*, where so many facts are circumstantially related, and where the universal rules of moral conduct are embodied, brings the truth of the Scriptures to the highest test, which no writings of an inferior origin could endure. But they have passed through the ordeal in the fullest sense; and the severest scrutinies of the ablest opposers, for eighteeen centuries, have not been able to remove them from the high ground which they assume.

The *History* and the *Miracles*, the *Types* and the *Prophecies*, of the Old Testament Scriptures, are entirely consistent with themselves, and point to one grand object of consummation. Their perspicuity and force, in relation to that object, are attested by the *Expectation* of its fulfilment which they excited throughout the world.

They were verified by the coming of ONE, at the time and in the place predicted, in whom they all have a full and consistent accomplishment. To no other person that ever appeared in the world, can they be

made to apply. This accomplishment is the more surprising, as features so seemingly opposite and irreconcilable, are foretold to belong to the MESSIAH, in whom they unite.

You have next seen the testimony of connected and independent *Eyewitnesses* and *Friends*, to facts of which they were competent judges; and whose sincerity in what they attest is stamped by their long and uniform adherence to that testimony, to which they sacrificed every thing valuable to them in this life.

Fresh testimony arises from strenuous *Opponents*, and that of the most unexceptionable kind. In the course of their opposition, by their constant reference to the *facts* of Christianity, they authenticate them in the strongest manner. *Historians*, who incidentally mention the subject, do the same; and the public *Edicts* of the Roman government not only bear testimony to the existence of the Christian religion, but prove its extensive and rapid progress, as well as the steady adherence of the early Christians to their profession.

The *Success* of the Gospel is another source of testimony. The struggle betwixt Christianity, supported by its own evidence, and Paganism, maintained by all the power, prejudice, and learning in the world, terminated in the total subversion of the latter.

Testimony, likewise, from various *Traditions*, Customs, and Observances of worship, from *every part* of the world, as well as corroborating evidence from the most ancient *Histories*, and also from *Natural Appearances*, confirm the truth of sacred history.

With all this "CLOUD OF WITNESSES" on the one hand, there is not the shadow of *Opposing Testimony*

on the other; which, considering the interests involved in crushing the new religion, is of itself conclusive on the subject. No denial of its facts and miracles proceeds from Judea, where they were witnessed. On the contrary, explicit declarations of their reality, by the most determined opposers, are published in their own age at Jerusalem. The early heathen writers against Christianity, all *admit* and reason on them; and not one word to invalidate them proceeds from the Roman government, which so violently persecuted and strove to put it down. You have, therefore, the *concurring testimony* to the *facts* of Christianity, and to the *miracles* of Christ Jesus, of the *whole age* in which they took place, *without* ONE *dissenting voice.*

This UNANIMOUS testimony, from persons of all descriptions, is not such as proceeds from people indifferent about the matter, who would take it upon trust, and neglect to examine it; but from those who entered warmly into the question, either in the way of the most ardent support, or of the most determined opposition. *Attestation so forcible, cannot be produced for any other fact in the world.* Never were such unequivocal proofs collected on any other subject. Those who adhered to Christianity, relinquished their all for its support. The Jewish rulers lost their all by their opposition. Of others who ranged themselves against it, those who valued their religion or philosophy, found them degraded and exploded. Those in power, found all their efforts against it baffled. The concussion was felt from the Jew to the Gentile; from the "Shrine-maker" to the Priest; and from the "Craftsman" to the Emperor of the Heathen world.

Keeping in view this body of evidence, drawn from *fact* which you cannot controvert, whence do you think came the BIBLE, and how was it compiled? It is entirely different from any other book. "It is the only book, excepting such as are copied from it, which gives an account of the world as God's world. It begins with an account of his creation of it, to ascertain who he is, concerning whose providence, commands, promises, and threatenings, this sacred book all along treats." It is essentially different from the writings of those who oppose Divine revelation, who, if they allow that God created the world, do all in their power to exclude him from its management, and even from any interference in it, by placing every thing under the direction of what they call "Nature," which has been justly termed the Deist's god. On the contrary, the Bible, not only in treating of the management of the material world, but in recording the histories of nations and individuals, invariably keeps in view the hand of the Almighty. Thus, it refers all things to their proper and ultimate cause, and fixes an impression on the mind of his constant superintendence and agency. The attention of the Christian is thus turned from secondary and inferior objects, while he is led to fix his reliance on his Heavenly Father; recollecting that, without Him, a sparrow shall not fall on the ground, and that "he that built all things is God."

The Bible, as soon as it has related the entrance of sin, assures man that every thing arround him is essentially changed. All things at first were created "very good;" but now the ground is cursed for the sake of man. "In *sorrow* shalt thou eat of it all the

days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." No condition of life exempts from this sentence any individual of the race of Adam. On the whole, you will find the course of your life, as well as its termination, to be what is here described. You may possess, like Solomon, all the means of enjoyment; you may be able, like him, to command every expedient for promoting it ; but when you sum up the whole, even in the midst of your career, and much more when stretched on the bed of death, you will be forced to come to the same conclusion at which he arrived.

" I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure ; and, behold this also is vanity. I said of laughter, it is mad, and of mirth, what doeth it ? I sought in my heart to give myself unto wine (yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom), and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under heaven all the days of their life. I made me great works, I builded me houses, I planted me vineyards, I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits : I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees. I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house ; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle, above all that were in Jerusalem before me. I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings, and of the provinces. I gat me men-singers and women-singers, and the de-

lights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do; and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."

Thus, the Bible presents a different view of this world from what we find anywhere else, although the picture it discloses comes home to the experience of every soul of man. It constantly draws off men's attention from a scene which, from its fleeting nature, if no other evil adhered to it, is *stamped with vanity*, while it directs them to a world of blessedness and joy.

The whole tendency of the Bible is to promote the holiness and the happiness of man. It assures him, that it is owing to want of holiness that he is not happy, and that all his uneasiness is consequent on his distance from God. But it shows him the way of reconciliation and recovery, and points out the path to glory, honour, and immortality.

Mr Hume says of the Pentateuch, that the least part of it consists in precepts of morality. But if that be preceptive which directs to happiness and teaches to avoid misery, which exhorts to virtue and warns against vice; then every line of the Pentateuch contains precepts of morality. The exhibition of the character of God,—the histories of men, with the approbation and consequences of what is good, and the ex-

posure of evil and its fatal effects,—with the whole of the ritual and typical system, the import and moral of which is, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the *Sin* of the world,"—as well as the direct admonitions with which the Pentateuch abounds, all concentrate in this one grand *moral precept*,—"Be ye holy, for I am holy."

The effects of the Bible in promoting the welfare and happiness of society, when they terminate with this life only, are very considerable. Even where its ultimate object is not attained, it produces, in a great degree, sobriety, integrity, and peace among men. To this truth consider the striking testimony presented by men of the world who are ignorant of its highest value. They are assisting in circulating the Bible, and providing means to enable the people to read it. What a tribute of homage to the Bible! That book condemns them and their ways, as living "without God and without hope in the world, and minding earthly things;" yet they see it to be conducive to calm the turbulence of human passions, which, in a particular crisis of the world, it is difficult to restrain from breaking out in acts of violence and bloodshed. How comes it that the Bible, after all the books that have been written, is the only one fit for this purpose?

Once more, then, it may be asked, what account do you give to yourself of the Bible? Whence came it? Do you imagine it is a fiction? Is it possible to conceive, that such a variety of *kinds* of evidence should all contribute to support what is false? Every thing *external*, with which it has the smallest connexion, yields its testimony, while nothing of this sort can be made to bear against it. Of the multitude of public

facts interwoven in its texture, not one can be controverted. Every thing *internal* affords confirmation. The character of God and of the Messiah; the nature of its doctrine; the excellence of its practical precepts; its character of man, applicable to every state of society, and verified in the experience of every individual; its suitableness, in all respects, to his circumstances; its consistency, which has been attacked without success by enemies, and displayed by its friends in great varieties of ways; its unity of design, from the beginning to the end, written in different and distant ages, and by different men, while its whole tendency is so useful and excellent; each and all of them giving attestation to its truth. On the other hand, not one kind of proof can be brought against it. Nothing but truth can account for all this. Never did the appearance of such an *assemblage* of proofs attest any falsehood, or even any other fact.

You still think it strange, if so much can be said for the truth of the Bible, that men in general do not believe it. For you are convinced in your heart, that the great body of those among whom you live, although they all take the name of Christians, *do not believe the Bible*. It does not, you are aware, influence them either in their hopes or fears. It is not the spring of their conduct and desires; and were it this moment to cease to exist, they would continue to live and to act exactly as they do at present. This, then, has a great effect in satisfying your mind, and preventing any anxiety on the subject that might lead to enquiry. Yet if all men firmly believed the Bible to be true, it would not add one iota to the strength of the evidence that belongs to it. We may, however, be well convinced,

that in this case you would not be so easy on the subject as you are at present. But while this would by no means increase the evidence for the truth of the Bible, consider that it would greatly diminish, if not set it aside. It would introduce a contradiction to what the Bible asserts of the state of the world. At present it describes the generality of men in respect to religion, according to fact, even in what are called Christian countries. "If," said Jesus to his disciples, "ye were of the *World*, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.—Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and *many* there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it." Even those who most openly oppose and denounce the Bible, are included in its descriptions and pre-intimations. "There shall come in the last days *Scoffers*, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Thus, after the lapse of 1800 years, it exactly describes the state of the world, notwithstanding outward forms and names, which, if in the present period all men believed it, would not be the case.

The many inconsistencies of those who profess to be Christians, and are acknowledged to be such by others, strongly fortify your mind in rejecting revelation. You narrowly observe their temper and conduct, and you perceive in them much evil in various ways. In the best characters in Scripture, you will see the evil

that adhered to them fully related. But what does this prove? It shows the force of human depravity, which exerts itself against the strongest and most counteracting influence. The evil of sin in Christians ought by no means to be extenuated; but surely what you perceive in them to be inconsistent with their profession, cannot be fairly laid to the charge of Christianity, to which it is opposed. As far as this evil goes, it does not arise from Christianity, but from the want of it. Faith and works (meaning by works every motion of the heart, as well as the outward conduct) are inseparable. Nothing purifies the heart but faith; but it cannot purify beyond the degree in which it exists. No man's faith in this world is perfect. And in as far as it is wanting, in that proportion will there be evil in the man, whether it appear in his outward conduct or not. Much evil, indeed, remains in Christians, which every Christian feels, and, like the apostle Paul, deeply laments. But this only discovers more fully the need of the great remedy for sin that is provided. It would be well were you rather to look to that remedy which is effectually, though gradually, removing in them the otherwise deadly disease of sin, than by looking to the disease itself to lull yourself to rest in your dangerous state, while, though you are little aware of it, the same disease is preying on your own vitals.*

* The numerous sects into which in every age Christians have been divided, while a cause of deep regret, and a lamentable proof of human depravity, have been regarded by infidels as affording a strong argument against Christianity. But from these very divisions a forcible attestation to its truth may be derived. While no external bonds, however strong, nor articles or con-

But, in every point of view, this is very precarious ground on which to build an opinion of the last importance. It is much easier to say who are not, than to say who really are Christians. We are bound to treat all as Christians, who appear to be such; but in the day that is coming, "every man shall bear his own burden." Speaking, in one place, of those who professed to be his disciples, the Lord divides them into four descriptions; but although certain effects were produced on all, only one of these four knew the grace of God in truth. The others after a season fell away. In another place, he represents one half of those who continued to make a credible profession to the end, as turning out at last self-deceivers. As you cannot distinguish these classes, you see what a sandy foundation you are building on, when you measure either Christianity itself, or your own state, by others. Besides this, there are many real Christians who are babes in Christ—not only as to the length of time since they have followed him, but who are weak in faith. In as far as this is the case, they must be "carnal," and "walk as men." And here again Satan will have an advantage in hardening your mind to serve his pur-

fessions of faith, the most orthodox or strict, have availed to produce uniformity of opinion or cordial co-operation among those who are ranged under the same denominations, there exists among real believers, although separated in different parties, a striking harmony of sentiment respecting the grand fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. Hence we see persons of various sects uniting together for the propagation of that truth in which they are all agreed. A real communion exists among them, sufficient to evince that they are all taught by one Spirit, and are all *one* in Christ Jesus. John, xvii. 21.

pose, and to conduce to your destruction. But if it please God to lead you to an acquaintance with your own heart, this will discover to you so much in yourself of what you did not see before, that while you will unfeignedly lament the inconsistencies of Christians, you will cease to turn them into an argument against Christianity, or to harden yourself in unbelief by dwelling on their shortcomings. On the contrary, you will find, in these very inconsistencies, a strong attestation to the truth of the Bible, and to the faithfulness of its descriptions.

The more every thing respecting the Bible is investigated and pressed home, the more will its truth appear conspicuous. Its evidence is such, that it is a well-known and generally acknowledged fact, that every argument, which has been brought against it by the ablest and most learned men, has been fairly and fully answered.

A native of Hindoostan, converted to God, was once asked by one of his countrymen why he had become a Christian. His answer was, "Because Christianity represents God as the *just* God, and the *Saviour*." Examine all other religions that were ever heard of, as well as every false system of Christianity, especially examine the system you rest on, whatever it may be, and you will find they all fail in one or other or both of these descriptions. The Gospel alone carries them both to their utmost extent, and unites them. It excludes every idea of salvation by works more or less, but it magnifies the *justice* and the *mercy* of God.

If you reflect at all, you must be sensible of your own weakness, and of your precarious and dependent

condition. You must be convinced that both your powers and information are limited. You cannot penetrate into futurity, and can only conjecture what may afterwards happen while you continue in this life. But with regard to that state to which your fathers are gone, and to which you are hastening, you know nothing at all, except information be given you. In itself it is covered with an impenetrable veil, and any discovery respecting it must come from above. As a rational man, then, instead of jesting or trifling on such a subject, as many do, or indulging blind prejudice, or putting the consideration of it far from you, you should seriously examine the only religion in the world that bears the impression of divinity.

The stroke of death will soon dissolve for ever your connexion with this world. It is a serious matter. Time, if once lost, can never be recalled. The most important alternatives are before you. It will be well if, through the blessing of God, you are led to make the happy choice. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.—For the Scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

While there are many who, in various ways, reject the counsel of God against themselves, there are others who RECEIVE the word of God, not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God,

which effectually worketh in those that believe.—"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." In his unconverted state, the believer may have read this declaration a thousand times, but he never saw any great importance in it, or rather never affixed to it any precise meaning at all. He had taken the name of Christian, and having, perhaps, made a strict profession of Christianity as he understood it, he did not doubt that he was what is called "a very good Christian." He is now aroused as from a dream. He sees that formerly he was in total darkness as to spiritual things; but the spell is broken. God has "given him a new heart, and has put a new spirit within him;" and his views of God, of Himself, and of the World, are changed.

That undefined idea of the mercy of God which he formerly entertained, without considering how it was reconcilable with those indications of wrath that are visible in the world, while, at the same time, there lurked a secret dread, unacknowledged even to himself, that God might at last be found to be his enemy, is at length done away. Now he beholds the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, in whose sufferings and death the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, and, at the same time, his love to the guilty children of men, are revealed from heaven. Now he perceives that GOD IS LOVE, and he loves God because God first loved him. This leads him to a discovery of his own character. He was always aware that, in a certain sense, he was a sinner, and not altogether what he ought to be. He was, however, accustomed to soften down and palliate to his conscience

what appeared wrong or defective in himself; but having now a distinct view of the ground on which man, who is guilty, can be just with his Maker, and how communion is restored and can be maintained with God, he is not afraid to look into his own heart, and to compare it with the perfect standard of the holy law. The consequence is, that he sees he was justly condemned, and that he had forfeited all by sin, but that now his sins are forgiven, and an inheritance beyond his most sanguine conceptions is provided for him. Thus, he has become acquainted with what his own wisdom could never have taught him, of what multitudes of the wisest men are ignorant. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

The world he sees to be exactly what it is described in the Scriptures—full of temptation and danger, and that vanity is legibly inscribed upon it. Yet he feels how much its vanities and evils entwine around his heart, and what a powerful hold they have on his affections. Hence, he experiences what the apostle Paul describes as his own internal warfare, and what he declares of the manner in which he became acquainted with his real state as a sinner, and also of the way in which he obtained relief.

In this situation, the Scriptures warn him that he must expect new trials, and that these are corrections of his heavenly Father, intended to embitter sin, and

to wean his heart from the world, to which it is naturally so much attached. This is accordingly verified in his experience. These trials are not brought upon him all at once. When the Lord conducted the Israelites out of Egypt, He "led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt." In like manner, believers are only tried as they are able to bear it. But they are assured that, through much tribulation, they must enter into the kingdom of God. Many of their trials are peculiar to them as Christians. If they be watchful, they can trace them to some evil of which they have been guilty; and they soon learn to know that there is much retribution in this world.* The word of God expressly warns us against either "*fainting*" under such trials, or "*despising*" them; and when we are enabled to avoid these two extremes, to which human nature is so prone, we reap from them the peaceable fruits of righteousness. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law." The dispensations of God, as they affect him in his situation, circumstances of life, connexions, and whatever befalls him, are observed and marked by the Christian; and they constantly lead him to see and acknowledge that invisible hand by which he is directed. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove

* When the apostle Paul was stoned at Lystra, and so violently persecuted wherever he went, he could not but recollect the part he bore in stoning Stephen, as well as the other persecutions of which he had been guilty.

thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no."

"Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona," said the Lord to Peter, "for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in heaven." God had revealed to Peter that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; and whoever believes this, "is born of God." Christians know well that there is nothing in or about them to entitle them to this unspeakable honour and blessing. They ascribe it to sovereign grace—free unmerited favour. Being now partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel, and their life being hid with him in God, they are become ONE with Jesus Christ. This is the foundation on which they rest for eternity, being well assured that other foundation can no man lay. So far from imagining that they have received remission of sin on account of any change in them, or of works performed by them, they know that their repentance and good works, whatever may be their measure, are the effects and fruits of the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Christians look to Jesus Christ as the Divine Saviour, to whom all power in heaven and in earth is committed, who, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." Beholding him in this twofold capacity, as uniting the Divine and human natures—God manifest in the flesh—they see him in every respect qualified to be that complete Saviour which their case requires. On this point there is not the smallest difference among Christians. Here there is but one voice of all of them—babes, young men, and fathers. In the language of

Thomas, they unite in exclaiming, "My Lord and my God."

The highest creature could have done no more than his *duty* in obeying the law under which he was placed; and if he had broken it, could have borne only for himself that punishment which justice required should be inflicted. But the dignity of the person of Jesus, the Messiah, rendered his obedience and sufferings infinitely *meritorious;* and therefore, in the way of justice, as well as mercy, what he did, and what he suffered, are placed to the account of all who are united to him by faith. These are bought with a price, even his blood. "He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." God "hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The honour of the law is in this way maintained to the utmost, and the believer enters heaven on the footing of an obedience which is absolutely perfect—the complete fulfilling of the law, denominated in Scripture "The righteousness of God." Thus "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

When Isaiah beheld in vision, before his incarnation, Him who wrought this righteousness sitting upon his throne, high and lifted up, he saw the seraphim standing above, who veiled their faces with their wings, and cried, "Holy, holy, holy Jehovah, God of Hosts." John also in a vision afterwards saw him "in the midst of the throne," and heard the voice of ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels round about the throne, "saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power,

and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Receiving, therefore, on the ground of His righteousness, "the promise of eternal inheritance," his people, while sensible of all their guilt and unworthiness, can, with confidence, say, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we establish the law." Every one of those schemes, on the other hand, which human ingenuity has ever devised, respecting the way in which man can be accepted by God, those which appear to come nearest to the Gospel, as well as all others, compromise the justice of God, and derogate from the honour of his holy law.

During the life of Jesus Christ, there was a controversy between him and the Jewish rulers, whether or not he was the Son of God. He affirmed that he was. They disallowed his claim, charging him with blasphemy on this account. While in his state of humiliation, this controversy was permitted to continue. But when he had finished the work which he came to perform, the question was decided by his resurrection from the dead, by which he was declared to be the Son of God with power. Believers, therefore, now regard him as their risen and exalted Lord,—their compassionate High Priest within the veil, who ever liveth to make intercession for them. His language to every one of them is, "Fear not, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." They look to him and confide in him, as ruling for them, watching over them, and sympathizing with them. "We have not an High Priest, who cannot be touched wish the feeling of our infirmities, but who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He is the good Shepherd,

who laid down his life for the sheep, and who engages that no one shall pluck them out of his hand. "My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." —"I and my Father are one." Notwithstanding this exalted dignity, he is not ashamed to call them his brethren, and he calls them "friends." Yet in this gracious and condescending intercourse, his supreme authority must never be lost sight of. "Ye are my friends, *if ye do whatsover I command you.*"

They also wait for his second coming. Two great promises have been made to the people of God. One was the first coming of the Messiah, and at the set time it was fulfilled. The other, for which they now wait, will be equally verified. "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Impressive views of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, just in proportion as he is received by faith, penetrate, solace, and animate the minds of Christians as they pass through this world. Jesus Christ is to them the All in all, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Their regret is, that they still know so little of him, and are so little influenced by his authority; yet, on the whole, they are enabled to say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."—"When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." The constraining love of Christ, amidst much depravity and weakness, is the rule and principle of their lives and conduct. They "thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that

they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." Here is the source of all the good works that are acceptable to God. Formerly they may have made many self-righteous attempts to reform themselves, but all proved ineffectual. Nothing can purify the heart but faith. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—"*Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*" Made acquainted now, in some measure, with the hardness of their own hearts; awakened from the false security they once enjoyed; turned from that state of rebellion, in which, like others around them, they formerly lived, they are filled with a sense of redeeming love, and of that compassion extended to them who are so unworthy, to whom mercy has flowed through the humiliation and sufferings of the Son of God. They therefore desire to become every day more and more "an habitation of God through the Spirit;" to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour, and to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is their *reasonable* service. In entire dependence on the supply of the Spirit of Christ, without whom they can do *nothing*, they purify themselves even as Christ is pure, and "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling; *for it is God which worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*"

The High Priest, under the Mosaic dispensation, entered within the second veil once every year, not without the blood; and at the peril of his life he durst not enter at any other time, or in any other way.

Christians realize the truth, of which that was a figure. Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for them through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, they are invited to draw near, in the full assurance of faith, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. In this way they experience the faithfulness of God as the hearer of prayer, and hold communion with him from off his mercy-seat.

When the Christian reads the Scriptures, he is struck with their dignity, which is never for a moment compromised; with their authority, which is never lowered; with that fulness on every subject, which all the books that have been written from them have not exhausted; and with that unity of design, which, amidst such variety of circumstances, is always so conspicuous. Their morality, he observes, is complete. Not one false principle can be charged upon it. Nothing can be added to it, nothing taken away. The excellence and usefulness of the precepts of Scripture he feels every day, as far as he is enabled to reduce them to practice. With gratitude he acknowledges the perfect suitableness to his case of the salvation of God, removing his guilt, providing the righteousness he wants, affording the assistance and protection he requires, warding off the punishment in a future state which he otherwise dreads, and promising that endless and complete happiness which alone can satisfy the desires of his mind.

The Scriptures give him so consistent a view of the character of God, and so just a representation of this world: they so entirely correspond with his inward

convictions and experience; they contain so exact a description of his own heart and of all its workings; they teach a doctrine so well suited to whatever state he may be in, whether of prosperity or of adversity, of youth or of old age, of health or of sickness; so adapted even to the hour of death, when nothing he ever possessed or hoped for in the world could be of the smallest use to him, that he *knows* "of the doctrine that it is of God." Although, therefore, he may be entirely ignorant of the evidence derived from history and other sources for the truth of the Scriptures,—although he may not be able to dispute for them, or to unravel the many objections which the men of this world, "sporting with their own deceivings," devise against them; yet as soon could they persuade him that the sun does not shine in the firmament, or that the world itself does not exist (truths which, in their wisdom, some of them have gravely doubted), as that the Bible does not contain "the true sayings of God." And not for ten thousand worlds could they induce him to part with the smallest portion of that hope which he has, as an anchor of his soul, both sure and steadfast, of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven, after this world and its works shall be burnt up. He looks, therefore, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

CHAPTER XXVI.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES.

The truth of Christianity is pressed on our belief with a greater weight of evidence than any other truth ever yet submitted to the consideration of the human mind. While some of its proofs lie open to the view of the most uneducated, there are others that may exercise the research and the industry of the most learned. But the Scriptures contain in their own bosom an inexhaustible source of evidence independent of all that is external. Were the evidence of the truth of the gospel accessible only to such as have leisure to examine all the grounds on which it may be shown to rest, it must for ever be hid from the greater number of those to whom it is addressed. The great majority of the world have no leisure for such enquiries, and have no opportunity to conduct them to a proper result. But the Scriptures are addressed to all mankind, and it is at their peril that any neglect their message, even though want of education or opportunity for examination may conceal all the outward proofs.

It is the self-evident authority of the Scriptures that makes all men guilty who neglect the great salvation which they announce. Accordingly the Lord Jesus Christ declares, "This is the condemnation, that light hath come into the world, and that men have loved

darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." The gospel is here represented as light; "whatever maketh manifest is light," and light needs nothing external to show that it is light. Of this every man must be immediately convinced. And were not the heart of man depraved, as the Scriptures represent it, there would not have been among all the multitudes that hear the gospel one solitary individual who remained in ignorance unbelief, or doubt. Ignorance, unbelief, and doubt, all arise from Spiritual blindness and dislike to what the gospel testifies. Were the Scriptures unknown in our land to this hour, and were they now to be found on a barren waste, no man could hear them, and remain without guilt and condemnation if he should reject them.

The internal evidences of the Scriptures are inexhaustible. They meet us in every page, and almost in every expression. Evidence here crowds on the mind from every quarter. It is impossible to select a fact or a circumstance, which, to those who are accustomed to contrast the wisdom of God with the wisdom of man, may not afford some portion of evidence. The Scriptures are the word of God, and who can speak like God? He may be known by his speech as well as by his power.

Without at all attempting to exhaust this subject, without dwelling on the most momentous points in which evidence is exhibited, a few instances only shall here be referred to, in which the Scriptures manifest themselves by their own nature to be from God, and render all men guilty who reject their testimony.

First, and above all, stands the view which they give of the character of God. Were we to confine our

observations to the Divine character, as manifested in the works of creation and providence, philosophy could not even here boast its attainments. Though the heavens and the earth declare the eternal power and godhead of the Creator; though infinite wisdom and Almighty power, may be traced in every part of the work of his hands, yet it is a fact that is attested as well by the writings of the heathens as by the Bible, that God was never known and worshipped by them even as he is discoverable in his works. No nation, or individual, without revelation, ever found out God as he is manifested in his works. This holds true of the wisest of all the boasted sages of antiquity. Not one of them knew God as fully as he is displayed in the works of creation and providence, and all of them failed essentially in not holding the worship of the one God as excluding the worship of any other god. The man who worships inferior deities in fact denies the one God. This was, without one exception, the sin of the wisest of the heathen world.

The Bible is the only book that gives a proper account of the God that made the world. While the most celebrated of all the philosophers faltered in the reception of this great truth. Could those who penned the Scriptures, and were accounted the foolish things of the world, reach, by their own unassisted wisdom, the whole truth on this glorious subject? The Bible, then, which contains this account of the God of creation, is not the work of man, but is the work of God himself. Had it been the work of man it would have been like all human works; it might have taught something of the truth, but would have corrupted it with an admixture of falsehood.

What has been stated with respect to the ignorance manifested by the ancient heathen sages, will be still more obvious, if we consider that, after all the light that has come into the world, the same assertion holds still true to a certain extent with respect to mere philosophers. It may be safely affirmed, that the philosophers do not yet know God as fully as his works of creation manifest him. While they speak of Almighty power as one of the attributes of God, and infinite wisdom as another, yet they often talk as if his power were limited by what they term the laws of nature, and as if his wisdom was obliged to have recourse to expedients to remedy necessary evils. The optimism of the most celebrated modern philosophers does not acknowledge the attributes of God as they are manifested in the heavens and the earth. To the Scriptures, to the unlearned apostles, enlightened and commissioned by the Spirit of God, are we indebted for a discovery of the character of the God of creation. Even to the Athenians, and all the most civilized nations of Greece, the Apostle Paul was obliged to declare the God who made them, as well as to the most barbarous savages.

But it is in the character of God, as manifested in the works of redemption through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there is the most overwhelming self-evidence of the truth of the Scriptures. All nations and all ages have complained of sin and misery, but it is in the Scriptures alone that the state of man is accounted for; and that a remedy is found worthy of all the perfections of God. It is here only that God can be seen with the infinite perfection of all His glorious attributes. Here he is manifested in some parts of his cha-

racter, in which he is not seen in the revelation which he has made of himself in the heavens and the earth. The perfection which he displayed in creation and providence was not perceived by the heathens in that light in which it ought to have appeared. But if the heathens had understood every part of the divine character submitted to them in the works of God, they would still have been ignorant of those divine attributes that are peculiarly displayed in redemption. It is here only that justice and mercy can be seen in perfection and in harmony. These two divine attributes, in their infinite extent, are reconciled in the way of the recovery of sinners through the atonement made on the Cross. The most rigorous justice has nothing to allege against the salvation of the most guilty for whom Christ died. Jesus Christ was the Son of God, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God. When he became the substitute of sinners, fulfilled the the law in their stead, and bore the curse due to man's disobedience, justice was completely satisfied. It is in this view that the Apostle Paul exclaims, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."

This affords the amplest evidence of the truth of the gospel. It manifests God in all divine perfection, ascribing to him perfections in harmony and without limit, which no other scheme ever professed. Indeed, though this plan of salvation is the wisdom of God, yet it is so far from being agreeable to the wisdom of this world, that it is still generally overlooked, denied, or perverted. Here then is a conception of the divine character, that transcends all that was imagined by the wisest of the heathen philosophers farther than their

conceptions transcend those of the most uncultivated savage. Here is a view of the divine character that must be true, otherwise there is a conception of God in the human mind more excellent than that which justly belongs to him. Either the God of the apostles, manifested in Jesus Christ his Son, is the true God, or they have succeeded in depicting a character of God more excellent than that which he really possesses. To make such a supposition would be blasphemous and absurd. Shall such a character be the invention of illiterate men? Impossible. The Scriptures then which display this divine character, must be the word of God.

The sovereignty of God is an attribute necessary to the perfection of his character, and one which is manifested most fully in the Scriptures. We meet it in every part of the Bible; but it shows itself in a light peculiarly striking in saving some of the human race, while others not more guilty are suffered to perish in their wickedness. God saved Paul when engaged in the most virulent persecution of the Christians, while the rich young man was suffered to depart in his unbelief, though he honoured the Lord Jesus as a teacher sent from God, and anxiously enquired at him what he should do in order to inherit eternal life. Yet this view of God s extremely disagreeable to the human mind, and no part of the divine character is more uniformly concealed by all who would commend themselves or their doctrine to general acceptance. Even some Christians who believe the sovereignty of God to be a divine attribute, think it prudent to throw over it a veil of obscurity. If the Scriptures were a forgery, how could we account for such a doctrine hold-

ing so prominent a place in their pages? Surely had the preachers of Christianity invented their system, this would not have been one of its doctrines.

In the account also which the Scriptures give of the state of man, we have internal evidence of their truth. That the earth is a scene of sin and misery, is a fact constantly pressed on us by the most melancholy proofs; but obvious as this truth is, it is not generally admitted in its proper degree, because all are naturally unwilling to acknowledge it. The Bible is the only book which gives an account of this sinful condition of man in its full extent, and ascribes it to an adequate cause. While all ages and nations have lived in guilt and misery, they have been unwilling to see either the one or the other of them in its whole extent, and untaught by the disappointment of all who have gone before, they are still dreaming of virtue and happiness. The Scriptures declare all men to be guilty; and the conscience of every man, unless it is totally stupified, will give the same testimony. They at the same time manifest God in a character in which he can save the guilty, while he remains most perfectly just. The man then who rejects the Scriptures, has in himself sufficient means of ascertaining their truth. This is the ground on which it is condemnation for any man to reject the gospel. Millions are unable to examine the external evidence of the Scriptures, but all men who hear the gospel have within themselves the means of knowing that it is true. The gospel is light.

The Scriptural view of the final destination of man, as saved by Jesus Christ, affords a most satisfactory evidence of the Scriptures being from God. If the Bible be the only book that exhibits the present guilt,

depravity, and misery of man, it is also the only one that gives its full dignity to human nature. The glory of man, in the heavenly state, is so wonderful, that it never could have been conceived, had it not been divinely communicated. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit." We need not say then that such a thought was not to be expected from the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. We may affirm that it was as much beyond the reach of the highest human intellect as of the rudest savage. By the assumption of our nature, Jesus Christ has raised man, not only from the ruins of the fall, but exalted him to a dignity to which originally he had no title, and placed him above the angels of God. He that by sin was made lower than the beasts, is, by union with the Saviour, made the head of the whole creation. Even in heaven there is no superior to man but God himself. Could such a thought ever have entered into the mind of man? So far is this beyond the train of our usual conceptions, that after all that the Scriptures teach on this head, many still continue ignorant of the peculiar dignity of human nature in heaven. Even many of the heirs of glory themselves, with the Bible daily in their hands, seem not aware of the full extent of their birth-right and inheritance, as the sons of God through Jesus Christ, as being one with him who is one with God.

The place that the Scriptures assign in the Christian system to a holy life, and the grounds on which it is rested, afford evidence that the Bible is from God. Nothing can be more evident, from every part of the

Scriptures, than the design of their Author to promote the holiness of his people. The importance and necessity of a holy life meet us in every page. But how is this to be secured? If holiness be essential to the character of every Christian, what is the most likely way in which it is to be enforced with the best prospect of success. The voice of men in all ages and countries here calls out to make eternal life the wages of a holy life. But notwithstanding that the Scriptures make holiness essential to the character of the saved, yet they make eternal life to be the *gift* of God. They represent justification as totally independent of all works, either before or after conversion to God. Yet they declare that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. This is what no writers, guided by their own wisdom, would have taught. Every man, anxious for the interests of holiness, and following his own conceptions, would have made works a condition of justification. So obstinately are men attached to this view, that after all the labours of the Apostle Paul, they who are not enlightened by the word and Spirit of God, still make justification, in some measure, to be by works. They either speak on the subject as if nothing were said on it in the Bible, or as if the view of it there given would lead to licentiousness, just as was objected in the Apostles' days, as we see from Rom. vi. 1; or by the most forced interpretation they contrive to make the doctrine of the word of God harmonize with their own.

On the other hand, many either openly disparage good works, or are afraid to press them home, lest they should lead people astray about the way of salvation. Though they are in an extreme opposite to the former,

yet they appear to be of the same mind, namely, that there is no way of urging good works as essential, without making them a condition of justification. The Scriptures, by the greatest possible distance, keep clear of both these extremes. While they most explicitly aud repeatedly declare, that not by works of righteousness which we have done, hath God saved us, but according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, yet they constantly press on us, that he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. Holiness to the Lord is inscribed in every part of the revelation of God. The Bible, then, is the only book in which no account is made of works as to justification, while holiness is represented as essential to salvation. To every mind capable of reflection, this affords the most satisfactory evidence that the Scriptures are the Word of God.

The perfection of the system of morality exhibited in the Scriptures is unrivalled; and the zeal for its interests manifested by the first preachers of the Gospel, is altogether inconsistent with the supposition of imposture. No man can candidly read the representation of the consequences of sin, and the earnest dissuasives against it in the writings of the Apostles, and entertain the smallest suspicion that this is the work of forgery.

While the writers of the Scriptures carry moral duties to their proper extent, they manifest their inspiration by their uniform sobriety on this subject. The morality of the gospel is perfect, but it is not overstrained in any single instance. No prudence could have effectually secured this, had they in any

matter been left to themselves. How soon human wisdom showed itself, in forming a rule more rigid than the word of God, we may see in the writings of the Fathers. The common use of wine, second marriages, and often marriage altogether, were forbidden to those who aspired to Christian perfection. This shows that nothing but the Spirit of God in the writers of the Scriptures could have constructed a system of morality at once perfect, yet not overstrained, and unsuitable to the present condition of man. While the wisest among philosophers never formed a system so perfect, and while they who aspire to the honour of forming a sect distinguished for holiness, always go beyond the proper limits of duty, shall such perfection and sobriety be found only in the Bible, and in the uneducated Apostles of Christ. Surely they spake by God.

The Scriptures prove themselves to be from God, by the estimate which they give of the things of this world. There is nothing in which there is a more decided difference than between some of the distinguished men of antiquity and the Apostles on this point. Some of the renowned sages of antiquity refused the things of this world, as if they were an evil, or at least as if they were not in themselves a good. But there is no such thing in the Scriptures. All the good things of the world are reckoned by the writers of the Scriptures to be in themselves good, and they are rated according to their true value. They are not contemned, as being utterly useless, but they are despised in comparison of a greater good, and refused if they stand in the way of duty. In all the writings of the Apostles, we do not find one such paradox as was common with

the heathen moralists, that poverty is as much to be desired as riches, calumny as a good name, sickness as health, pain as pleasure. We are called on in Scripture to surrender our life, if required in the service of God; but it is never supposed that life is not a blessing, and that death is not an evil. This sober estimate of the things of this world, accounting all things on earth as comparatively nothing, but allowing them their proper value in another view, shows that the Scriptures are the word of God. When man attempts, in his own wisdom, to touch this subject, he always, on one side or other, runs into extravagance.

The manner in which the joys of heaven and the punishments of hell are represented in the Scriptures, is an evidence that they are from God. This is a point that would bear illustration from the writings of all who have indulged in human speculations on these awful subjects. How differently do the Apostles speak, from the manner in which they are treated in the heathen writers! How different are the Heaven and Hell of the Scriptures, from the Elysium and Erebus of the poets! Suffice it here to say, that no man ever wrote about heaven and hell as the Bible writers. The Bible, then, must be the word of God.

In the writings of theologians and moralists of all ages, disputes and disquisitions about free-will and the decrees of God have occupied a most prominent place. These two things appear to human wisdom to be irreconcilable. Accordingly, many of those who hold the one, labour to disprove the other. To this day the controversy is continued, and seems as far from being settled as ever. By human wisdom, indeed, it never will be settled. But the Scriptures manifest themselves

to be from God, by teaching what to the dictates of sound reason appears necessarily true on both these points, while they deign not to enter into any explanation of the way in which they may be reconciled. They show us that man acts voluntarily, yet that all things are according to the eternal decree of God. These two things meet us in every page, and we must receive them as we do the doctrine of the Trinity, solely on the testimony of God, although unable to fathom the inscrutable manner in which they assuredly harmonize. "Ye will not come unto me," says Jesus, "that ye might have life." Yet the same Lord says, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." While the great body of the world take one side on this question, as if it were in opposition to the other,—while some endeavour to reconcile the conflicting claims by mutual limitation, the Scriptures hold both in their full extent. If prophets and apostles spoke by the wisdom of men, why did they differ from all who speak according to human wisdom?

There is one characteristic in the Bible, which runs through all the variety of its communications, and is of so peculiar a nature as to manifest that the book in which it is so constantly found is not the work of man. This is the fact, that in no one of all the innumerable communications contained in Scripture, is there ever any regard paid to the gratification of mere curiosity. Facts and events are exhibited no farther than they bear on the point which appears to be in view; and in many instances we are left without satisfaction where our curiosity is most ardently awake. The information which commentators, in such cases, are so ready to supply, by probability or conjecture, proves that the

original was not the composition of human wisdom. Had it been so, it would not have been deficient in any point interesting to curiosity. A book, then, that systematically refuses indulgence to one of the strongest principles in our nature, cannot be the work of man.

The style of the Scriptures bears testimony that they are the word of God. It is not meant that they are the perfection of composition according to the rules of human eloquence. To try them by this rule would be to degrade them. The Holy Spirit, who speaks in them from first to last, employs the various styles of all the writers through whom he speaks. But throughout the whole Scriptures there is one manner, a style that manifests them to be the word of God. They are not, as a whole, like any production of the human mind. In sublimity of thought and expression, all the grandeur of the orators and poets of Greece and Rome is left far behind. It is true that Mahomet proposed the excellencies of the style of the Koran, as the test of its being the work of God, but it is as true that the claim is false and unfounded. His sublimity is turgid bombast, except where it is borrowed from the source of truth. While the Spirit of Inspiration adopts every variety of style, according to the genius of the writers employed by him, and suitable to the subject of communication, the Scriptures every where display a manner characteristic of themselves, which all persons acquainted with them easily recognise, and which never can be completely imitated by any human writer. This it would be impossible to describe to those who are unacquainted with the Bible. But it is a thing which every one who searches the Scriptures contin-

ually feels in its perusal. In solemnity, simplicity, authority, and majesty, the style of the Scriptures is unrivalled.

The impartiality displayed in recording the faults of the people of God, is a most convincing internal evidence that the Bible is from God. This is exemplified in no other history. In the Bible there is neither colouring nor concealment. Neither is the bosom friend nor the most distinguished favourite of the writers spared when he transgresses; but his history comes down to posterity burdened with all his sins. No uninspired pen has ever fully imitated this peculiarity. Nor, on the other hand, is there any disposition manifested in the Scriptures to exaggerate the crimes of the wicked; although this is so much in the spirit of human wisdom, that the gravest writers do not scruple to add circumstances of aggravation to the conduct of transgressors. The book that, in all cases, avoids both these extremes, and neither spares the servants of God, nor blackens their enemies, must be written by a wisdom that is not human.

The consistency with themselves and with one another, maintained by the writers of the Scriptures, is a striking internal evidence of their truth. Their freedom from all real contradiction in the innumerable instances in which the same things are related by the different writers, with every variety of circumstance and great diversity of narrative, has often been alleged as a test of authenticity. The accounts often differ, but never clash. But what should here be particularly remarked is the perfect agreement in doctrine of all the different writers of the different ages and countries, who were employed by the Holy Spirit in recording the revelation

of the Divine will. To some this may appear a thing easily effected. But those who are acquainted with the subject will be convinced that nothing but the inspiration of the writers will account for the fact. There are no two uninspired writers, the most accordant in religious sentiment, who will be found thus uniformly to correspond. Indeed this entire consistency of sentiment is not to be found in the writings of the same author at different periods. Increasing knowledge will appear in the productions of all who seek truth by investigation. But among the writers of the Scripture, there is the most perfect harmony, because they obtained not their knowledge of truth and duty by the efforts of study, but from the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

The agreement of the Old Testament with the New, respecting the scheme of salvation, is not to be accounted for on any other supposition than that the writers of both were guided by the Spirit of God. To many it may appear that forgery could easily accommodate the New Testament to the Old. But in fact the conformity is not obvious at first sight, and human wisdom would never have thought of bringing the doctrine of Christ out of the law of Moses. So far from there being an apparent identity, there is an apparent discrepancy; and the New Covenant appears inconsistent with the Old, both to Jews and Gentiles, when untaught of God, The body of the Jewish nation, through the misunderstanding of their law, looked for salvation by works, and human wisdom would never have discovered in it a testimony for the free salvation of the Gospel. There is indeed the most perfect harmony between the Old Covenant and

the New, but this harmony could not have been effected by human contrivance. It is a harmony in the midst of apparent discrepancy.

In like manner, among the writers of the New Testament there is a real harmony with apparent discrepancy, both in doctrine and narration. The Apostles, instead of manifesting a studied agreement in their doctrine, often discover apparent discrepancies. While patience of examination, and a due consideration of the difference of circumstances, will convince any candid mind of the perfect agreement among the inspired teachers, the apparent discrepancies take away any suspicion of imposture and concert. In relating the same facts they do not copy each other, but narrate with various diversities. So far from studying agreement, their diversity is often such as at first sight to appear contradiction. While there is always a possible solution of their difference without affecting their veracity, the difference itself makes it evident that they have not combined to deceive.

The adpatation of the Gospel to all men who hear it, is an internal evidence of the truth of the Scriptures. While sources of evidence, the most amazingly diversified, employ and satisfy research, the grounds of conviction are within the reach of every man. If any one reads the Scriptures without conviction, it is not for want or weakness of evidence, but because he is blinded by the god of this world through the corruption of his own heart. Does the Gospel testify to him that he is a sinner? does not his own heart testify the same, except he stops his ear against its voice? Does the Gospel testify that sin deserves the wrath of God? does not his own conscience testify the same? What

is the origin of all his fears? Why is he alarmed at death? It is not the momentary pain of dying that he fears. Were this all, the most timid might be brought to overcome this fear. In fact, there is no one who will not, to avoid death, suffer much more than the pains of dying. It is not the pain of death that he fears, but something after death, that undiscovered land from whose bourne no traveller returns.

Does the Gospel testify that to stand with acceptance before God we must have a spotless righteousness? and does not the reason of man testify the same? Can any law justify that is not fully kept? Does not every law, that is in any instance broken, condemn?

Does the Gospel testify that there is a perfect righteousness provided? And does not "the righteousness of God" fully answer the purpose for which it is proclaimed? Does it not satisfy the most awakened conscience? If it be really the righteousness of God, both appointed and provided by him, may not the faith of man rest on it with the fullest confidence? It cannot be deficient, if it has been effected by him who is equal with God. Here is a resting-place for the troubled conscience. Here is a solid ground of hope. No man needs ask his neighbour if this righteousness may be trusted.

Does the Gospel testify that this salvation is conferred freely by faith in Christ Jesus? May not any man see that this is the only ground on which it can be available? If all men are sinners, as all men ought to confess, they cannot escape wrath in any way of human merit. A free salvation is the very salvation that all men need. The Gospel, then, is in every respect adapted to the state and necessity of man, and by this

wonderful adaptation, carries its own evidence with it that it is from God.

But above all, the Christian possesses innumerable sources of evidence of the truth of the Scriptures, to which others have no access. In his own experience he finds a confirmation of all the accounts they give of the character of God and of man. In his own mind he finds the distinction between the old man and the new—between him that is of this world and him that is born of God. The Scripture testimony that formerly was denied, or not understood, with respect to the corruption of human nature, he now knows to be true. What to all natural men must ever appear absurd and fanatical, namely, the assertion of the Apostle Paul, that no good thing dwells naturally in man, he now feels and laments. Formerly, he may have devised schemes of interpretation to evade the Scripture testimonies respecting human nature; his own heart now testifies that all is literally true and applicable to every man. He sees himself in the light in which divine truth represents human nature, and, instead of glorying as formerly in the goodness of his heart, he condemns himself as a sinner; instead of pleading his righteousness before God, he humbles himself in dust and ashes.

The change of heart and character essential to the new birth, he also experiences; and knows that the Scripture doctrine with respect to this is from Heaven. While he sees that in himself by nature there is no good thing, he is conscious of love to God, to the Saviour, to Christians, to men in general, and of a real hatred of sin. That description of a Christian given in Romans vii., which none but the Christian can under-

stand, as belonging to the same man, at the same time, he now realizes completely in himself.

Formerly, he may have acknowledged the Scripture doctrine of the deity of Christ; now he feels that he must have an Almighty Saviour. He glories in the cross of Christ, because, from conviction of his sin and unworthiness, he feels that he needs to stand before God in the righteousness of his Son. He needs no external evidence to convince him that he has in himself no righteousness that can meet the demands of the divine law. This is testified by his own awakened conscience, as by the thunders of Sinai; and he feels it as strongly as if it were proclaimed by an angel from heaven. But in the righteousness of God he has peace. The righteousness of Christ, as being the righteousness of God, appears to him a firm and safe ground of confidence, by which he can confide in divine mercy, while he can meet divine justice. Here he sees the unity of humility and boldness, and while with Paul he exclaims, who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, with the publican he exclaims, God be merciful to me a sinner!

The view that the cross of Christ has given the Christian of the divine character, is so strong a ground of hope, that he is enabled not only to overcome the fear of death, but to long for the appearing of the Son of God in the clouds.

This is the view which the Scriptures themselves give of this matter. Jesus Christ says, "if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." John vii. 17. The Apostle John also declares, "he that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself. 1 John, v. 10. This takes it

for granted, that every believer has evidence in himself, independently of all external proof, that the Gospel is true. While this ought to instruct the Christian on this head, and cause him to consider the grounds of conviction here referred to, it has also the nature of internal evidence. No other writers ever rested their proof on such grounds as this. Evidence with respect to the truth of the Gospel proposed to the ear, is found in the mind of those who are addressed. The internal witness to the truth of the Gospel speaks distinctly and intelligibly to all who believe it; but this is a conception that must have come from Heaven. It has no resemblance to the natural anticipations of the human mind.

It is, then, a truth attested by Heaven, a truth verified by every Christian, that every believer has in himself the most satisfying evidence of the truth of the Scriptures as a revelation from God. While the infidel wanders in darkness in the midst of light, the Christian beholds the truth in its own evidence in himself with the clearness of a sunbeam. God, who commanded the light of creation to shine out of darkness, shines in his heart, to give him the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION.

It is evident from the several testimonies to the Messiah appealed to in the foregoing pages, that no truth was ever presented to the human mind, recom-

mended by proofs so numerous, so various, so connected, and so conclusive as that of the Christian religion. They are united, yet independent—distinct, though interwoven. They have uniformity in the midst of variety, simplicity in union with endless complication, and harmony in object among parts apparently discordant. History, miracles, types, and prophecies, each afford a separate and independent testimony. What an amazing thought, that the earliest and most authentic history in the world—a history in its progress extending from the creation to the last of the Prophets, selecting its parts throughout this whole range, and written by various hands through a period of 1500 years—should concentrate in one point, to mark out the Messiah and to shadow forth his character!

All other religions it is easy to trace to their origin of fraud, imposture, or corrupted tradition. Christianity, accompanied by the most direct and incontrovertible historical proofs, draws an accession of evidence from every conceivable source. We have observed it taking its rise from the fall of man, and proceeding forward on a uniform plan. Confined for a long period to one particular people, it maintains among them just and consistent views of the worship of God, while all the rest of the world are buried in darkness. At length it breaks forth on every side and by its own convincing evidence, accompanied by the blessing of its divine Author, but unaided by human power or learning, obliges the whole civilized world, in spite of its most determined opposition, at least to assume its outward form. The facts on which it rests are attested both by friends and enemies, and persons indifferent to it, and are not contradicted in any quarter.

We have seen a nation separated from all others, acting a conspicuous part on the theatre of the world, and possessing the most ancient records. Their writings are carried on from age to age, recording, as they occur, the transactions of the people among whom they are compiled; entirely coinciding with their own oral traditions, as well as with those of other nations. The history itself is, in the most momentous occurrences, indissolubly interwoven with that of the principal kingdoms then in the world. Egypt, confessedly the parent of civilisation and science, the instructress of Greece and Rome, was the first theatre on which this nation appears.

Nothing could be more memorable to the Egyptians than the occasion of the settlement of the Israelites in their land. A young man introduced among them as a Hebrew slave, raised to the office of Prime Minister, directing the affairs of the nation with singular prudence during seven years of plenty, and seven years of famine, in the course of which, and by his administration, a very essential change in the government took place, were events which could not soon be forgotten. To provide for his father and family, he brings them from Canaan to Egypt, where they and their posterity remain and multiply into a great nation. The king of Egypt becomes alarmed at their increase, and bringing them under servitude, endeavours to diminish their number, and depress them by cruelty and ill usage. At length increased to nearly three millions of persons, they obtain leave to depart, after several tokens of Divine interposition in their favour, no less public than distressing to Egypt. Subsequently to their departure, the king, with a powerful army, in too eager pursuit for

the purpose of bringing them back into bondage, are swallowed up in the Red Sea.

During forty years the Israelites remain in the wilderness which separates Canaan from Egypt, without any apparent means of human support. At the end of that time, they enter Canaan, make war on the inhabitants, and, after some years of severe contest, take possession of the land, which they claim as an inheritance bestowed on them long before by the Creator of heaven and earth. In that land they remain, from first to last, above fifteen hundred years, observing rites, and a mode of worship totally different from all other people in the world, either before or since.

After having attained, for several ages under their kings, a considerable measure of power, they are conquered, their principal city destroyed, and themselves carried captive to Babylon. But at the end of seventy years they return in a body, and rebuild their metropolis. They afterwards experience many vicissitudes. Their country is often overrun; multitudes of them are carried away prisoners, and scattered among the nations; but never are they amalgamated with their conquerors, as has been without one exception the fate of all other people in similar circumstances; on the contrary, they always remain separate and distinct down to the present hour. In this situation they continue to marry among themselves, to maintain their peculiar forms of worship; and to preserve, with the most reverential scrupulosity, their public records, which they regard as delivered to them by God himself, through the instrumentality of his prophets.

The theatre on which the whole of this wonderful scene is exhibited is the most conspicuous in the world:

the facts are such as involve the character, history, and fate of kings and empires. Is there any contradiction in all this? There is none. As far as the authentic histories of other nations refer to the subject, and as far as more remote notices respecting it can be collected, in so far it is all confirmed.

In the Jewish records are contained many particular predictions concerning a Ruler, to whom the government was eventually to belong; and with reference to whom the Jews understood that the whole ritual of their worship was instituted. This excites their expectation; and they look for his coming at the particular period when they have reason to expect it from their writings. Nor is this expectation peculiar to themselves, it is common to the whole world.

At the same time, these records pointedly declare, that when he should appear, they, as a nation, would reject him, and that in consequence their government should be overturned, and themselves dispersed; but, on the other hand, that the nations of the world, who were sunk in the abyss of heathen idolatry and superstition, should acknowledge him as their Lord.

Jesus Christ, assuming to himself the character of this expected Messiah, appears at the time when his advent had been predicted. Knowledge and refinement had then risen to a higher pitch than ever they had attained before; a common language was almost every where spoken; and the general peace established throughout the world, under the powerful government of the first Roman Emperor, rendered intercourse among all nations both frequent and easy. When Jesus Christ stood forth as the Messiah, and wrought miracles in proof of his divine mission, the Jews, after

having watched him with the utmost jealousy, seized, and put him to death. Many individuals, however, among them, boldly recognised him as their Lord. The Jewish nation never denied the miracles he wrought, but persecuted his disciples as they had persecuted their master. Thus, every idea of collusion was cut off, which assuredly would have been pleaded had he been unanimously acknowledged by his countrymen.

But notwithstanding all the opposition of the Jewish nation, backed by the Roman Government—notwithstanding they had put him to death, the success of his doctrine was astonishingly rapid; Jews and idolaters embraced Christianity, and Christians were soon found in every part of the Roman empire. The temples of the gods were deserted, and the boasted systems of philosophers fell into contempt. Within three hundred years Christianity was acknowledged as the general religion. It has since retained an undisturbed pre-eminence in every civilized country of the world; and, on the whole, has produced the greatest revolution that has ever been witnessed in human affairs.

In order to be convinced that nothing but the character of Jesus Christ can account for such facts, let us for a moment more particularly consider what relates to his character. In the expected Messiah, the object of the patriarchal system was to be accomplished; the law of Moses, with its peculiar institutions, to be fulfilled and terminated; and the whole of the mysterious history of the Jewish nation, from its origin and through all its successive periods, to be unravelled. Whoever has attended, even in the slightest degree, to the complicated nature of the various institutions of

Judaism, must be satisfied that no human art was equal to the combination in any one character of all that was required to produce this result. Embracing an almost infinite variety of particulars, it was, from the perfection of the design announced, indispensably requisite that there should not be the smallest defect in any part of its accomplishment. As the model was complicated beyond measure, and at the same time consistent with itself, it was necessary that the counterpart should exactly correspond. The divine character which the Messiah assumed required infallibility. If any contradiction, any inconsistency with the pattern delineated, or any trace of imperfection or weakness in him to whom the whole applied, could be discovered, imposture must be confessed, and the claim abandoned. In attaining the utmost completion of this character, public contempt, disgrace, opposition, and, finally, death itself, were to be encountered, while even then the work was only begun, and every previous labour unavailing, unless the whole was consummated by his bursting the bars of the grave, and rising in majesty from the dead.

Detection in the event of failure was ensured, by the power and ability opposed to the claim. The whole was to be carried on in the face of men in authority, jealous and watchful, whose political existence depended on their exposing the fraud, if any such could be detected. These things sufficiently show the nature of the work which Jesus Christ undertook when he assumed the character of the Messiah. But he did undertake it, and no flaw has been discovered. Yet the subject of his mission has been canvassed and scrutinized beyond any other question in the world. Could any

thing but truth have passed through such an ordeal uninjured?

It has been observed, that the Apostles have drawn a perfect character, which, except by themselves, had never before been done. This is very striking, especially when we consider that it is exhibited through a train of circumstances the most trying that can be conceived. This perfection of character is indeed astonishing, and we may confidently conclude that its production was beyond the power of uninspired men, but it is only a part of a great whole. To the delineation of a perfect character was to be superadded the union, as in a common centre, of all the lines of a long series of prophecies, delivered, not systematically, but as occasions arose—not by one man, but by many—not at one period, but through a succession of ages; and likewise the completion of the correspondence and accomplishment of multiplied types, and of a complicated ritual; and the unravelling of a series of miracles, and of a history of the most singular description. And, as if all this were not sufficient, there were also to be promulgated the laws of a universal kingdom, involving the regulation of every motive of human action, and of every department of human conduct—laws which should challenge the approbation of the most enlightened men in successive ages, and should defy all the power of malevolence to point out in them either redundancy or defect. When the whole is taken into account, the possibility of imposture is left far out of sight. A work is accomplished, which, on any other principle than that of divine interposition, can never be explained. It is not necessary to bring into view the circumstances and attainments of the fishermen of Galilee, who have accomplished this

work ; it was equally beyond the ability of all the men of the most cultivated minds and greatest genius upon earth. Other things, when they have been done once, may be imitated. When Columbus had discovered a new world beyond the western ocean, it was easy to sail to it again. But it is impossible to act over again the part of the Messiah and the apostles. It could not be forged, and it cannot be imitated.

Let any set of men combine to write such a book as the Bible. Let their plan be laid so as to extend through a period of 1500 years. Let those who shall first enter upon the work obtain others to succeed them during that space of time. Let them write history, poetry, theology, and prophecies concerning the state of the world. Let them at length procure some one to come forward in whom all that they have written shall find its accomplishment. Let him be born in the place they had foretold, of the family they had singled out, at the exact period they had predicted. Let him be exhibited in the most critical situations, in the midst of enlightened, powerful, and determined adversaries, while they still uphold him as perfect, and defy his enemies to prove the contrary. Let his own death be a part of their plan, which he himself shall foretell. Let a number of persons arise immediately afterwards to carry forward the design, charge the government under which he suffered as his murderers, affirm that he is alive, and has given them convincing evidence that he will reward them in a future world. Let these men support their doctrines by an appeal to miracles openly performed before enemies armed with civil power ; and let them adhere to their testimony at the expense of life, and all things dear in this world. Let them

promulgate a new religion and code of laws, completely subversive of every existing religion on earth, and directly opposed to the indulgence of the strongest propensities of the human heart. Let this religion, by the force of its own evidence, win its way through the world, overthrow every opposing system, extend its triumphs, and finally establish itself in the most civilized nations, in spite of the most learned, the most determined, and the most powerful adversaries; and let the character of the leader, as set forward by his associates, be thus vindicated as "the light of the nations." Who does not see the total impracticability, the absolute absurdity of such an attempt? As soon might men of understanding be induced to undertake to climb up to the stars, as to propose to themselves such a scheme: yet all that has been thus supposed has been accomplished in Jesus Christ.

The Jewish economy, instituted for the ushering in of the Messiah, when viewed superficially, and without reference to its design and consummation, appears in several points unmeaning and inexplicable. Many are accustomed to consider it in this light, because they look at it in broken and disjointed parts. The pomp which it assumed, its gorgeous priesthood, and stately temple, its multiplied and costly sacrifices, its feasts and jubilees, and sabbatical years, the minuteness of its ritual observances, its various purifications and distinctions of meats and days, seem so strange and unintelligible as not to be entitled to the smallest regard. The character of the Jewish people, which, as delineated by the pen of inspiration, appears in its true colours, also disgusts their minds, and only tends to excite a proud self-preference. In this manner the wise are caught "in

their own craftiness." In consequence of the superficial attention which they bestow on it, and their most criminal prejudice, they can discern nothing but discordant and incongruous appearances. And yet on a proper examination, all would be discovered to be one harmonious whole,—a model, it is true, avowedly imperfect, a scaffolding afterwards to be laid aside,—but, viewed in its proper character as "having a shadow of good things to come," divinely calculated to introduce, and to attest the highest display of the power and the wisdom of God.

The man who has never considered the motions of the heavenly bodies, and is entirely unacquainted with their order, discerns nothing in the face of the heavens by night but confused masses of luminous substances, among which there is no appearance of any regularity and design. On the other hand, the Astronomer who has studied their laws, observed their order, and counted their number, so far as they are visible, perceives the most sublime indications of wisdom and arrangement. He is delighted with what he discovers, and smiles at that ignorance, which, apart from the outward glare, sees nothing whatever to attract admiration. Just so it is in regard to the Old Testament dispensation. It is capable of being seen in partial and distorted lights; but when properly attended to and understood, when viewed from the cross of Christ, in which its various parts unite and terminate, back through all its successive periods to its commencement, nothing can appear more orderly, more beautiful, more dignified. To those who consider it aright, its very outward form, when viewed as a whole, and including so much of the character of God and of his law,

possesses an imposing grandeur, which still arrests and overawes the unbelieving Jews, who, having yet the veil upon their hearts, cannot steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.*

By the whole tenor of revelation, the character of the Messiah is stamped as truly divine. Who is the substance of all the testimonies of the word of God? The Messiah. Of whom do the history, the miracles, the types, and the prophecies of the Old Testament testify? Of the Messiah. To whom does the whole substance of the New Testament point? To the Messiah. In whom do all the lines of revelation concentrate? In the Messiah. To whom do all the ordinances of worship, both of the Old Testament and the New, direct the observer? To the Messiah. The doctrines of the Bible teach us his character and his works; its precepts take their sanction from his authority; its emblems adumbrate his glory. The heavens and the earth, in their creation, are a figure of his greater work. The object of the Bible is to reveal

* In consequence of the different aspects in which the Mosaic dispensation may be regarded, instead of being considered as complete proof of the truth of Christianity, it is seized on as an organ by the prejudiced infidel, (as we have seen in the case of Mr Hume, who compared it to the modes of Egyptian superstition), by which it is supposed the evidence of the religion of the Bible may be entirely subverted. But such rejection of this proof,—of a description so peculiar as to place it beyond the possibility of suspicion that it is a human device,—instead of being considered as detracting from the evidence of the divine origin of the Scriptures, should be regarded as an irrefragable attestation of the authenticity of that book which describes in every page the blindness and prejudice of the mind of man, and the entire alienation of his heart from his Creator.

the Messiah; and in him the Father, whom no man hath seen or can see, is revealed. Our clearest, indeed our only discovery of the full character of God, is made in the preparation for the coming and the manifestation of Jesus Christ. In him and in his work the Father is seen to be what he is. The infinity of the divine justice and mercy, and the perfect harmony of both, are displayed in Jesus Christ, and in Him alone. Every system that denies or overlooks the Deity of the Lord Jesus, must exclude perfect justice as an attribute of the divine character, and cannot, without countenancing and encouraging sin, represent the mercy of God as including the chief of sinners. The doctrine of the Deity of Jesus Christ and his work only can reconcile justice and mercy. In examining the grounds of revelation, and ascertaining its certainty, the Deity of Christ is seen on the very surface of the evidence. To shadow forth his character, kingdom, and work, was the purport of all the discoveries which God made to man till he was revealed in human nature.

The types contained in the Old Testament Scriptures are numerous and various beyond measure. In themselves they are apparently of little or no value, and, as ordinances of God, worthy of him in no other way than as they are dignified by their reference to Jesus Christ. The prophecies of the Messiah describe him in a character never anticipated by the human mind—a character apparently contradictory, though in reality perfectly consistent, with itself. These prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and except in him never could, never can be fulfilled. Viewed separately, each of these sources of evidence yield

a testimony to Christianity of the most unexceptionable nature. In connexion, they combine as the different members of the same body, of which the Messiah is the soul. In addition to these sources of evidence, we have observed the numerous collateral testimonies by which it is supported. Does any other truth recommend itself to our reception with evidence so strong, so various, so amazingly connected in its infinitely numerous facts? The truth of the Gospel is of such a nature that it appears self-evident to the savage whose eyes are opened to understand it, yet its proofs are so multiplied and inexhaustible, that the best instructed Christian, in the study of the longest life, will not be able to say of it at his death, "I have left nothing to be discovered."

But of all the various proofs by which the truth of the Christian religion is established, the testimony that arises from its own internal evidence furnishes the most complete confirmation. The views of God and of his law, which both the Jewish and Christian dispensations present, are entirely dissimilar to the views of these subjects which any other religion ever gave, while they are strictly consistent and worthy of the Supreme Creator and Disposer of all things. The character of man, so fully verified by the experience of all ages, his fallen and ruined condition, his natural alienation from God, the way of his recovery of the Divine favour, his accountability, and the future retribution of never-ending happiness or misery that awaits all men, are delineated in the Scriptures in a manner which evinces that they are not cunningly devised fables. And although the pride of man is deeply offended by these doctrines, yet are they in such accordance with his inmost feel-

ings, and with the dictates of his conscience, when he allows its voice to be heard, that he is unable by the utmost effort wholly to divest himself of the persuasion of their reality. Together with all this, the account which the Bible contains of Him whom it represents as Mediator between God and man, of his person, his offices, his work, his humiliation, and glory, carries with it undeniable evidences of Divine appointment. This wonderful combination of qualities and circumstances so dissimilar to any thing besides in the history of the world—so unprecedented in every respect, and in itself of such paramount importance, is calculated deeply to affect the mind of man.

What must be the importance of that religion which God has deigned to establish by such a host of innumerably various evidences! To attest its truth, heaven and earth are summoned as witnesses. The visible and invisible worlds have alike combined their several testimonies. All the sources of moral evidence are exhausted in establishing the credit of revelation. The cause that demands and justifies such proof must be one singularly interesting,—it must annihilate in comparison all other objects. If no truth was ever presented to our consideration with such evidence, this truth must be of more value to man than all the subjects of his knowledge—than all other objects of his pursuit. This must be the CHIEF GOOD. There are few who will question this position in words. If Christianity be true, the infidel himself cannot deny its paramount importance. But there are few, if any, who practically act upon this principle, and in the tenor of their conduct act agreeably to this conviction. The real Christian will not pretend that he estimates this subject as highly as he

ought to do. As often as he brings this consideration before his mind, he will take shame to himself, that he does not value unseen things more than he ever has done, that he does not live more devotedly to God than ever he has lived.

But if the real Christian be not free from the charge of valuing Christianity less than it deserves, what shall be said of the great body of its professors? Notwithstanding their attention to its external ordinances, it is obvious, that the world has the ascendency in their hearts. The law of the Lord is, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you." On the contrary, the course generally pursued is the reverse. The bulk of professed Christians seek first that which Jesus Christ puts last. And can any thing be more preposterous than such conduct? Are the concerns of time to be put in competition with those of eternity? The things of time have their value; to despise or reject them is fanaticism. But they are always too dearly bought when earned at the expense of disregarding any part of the will of God. What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul! Let such persons seriously weigh the importance of religion, and exhibit the same prudence in regard to eternity as they do in the other concerns of life. The word of God contains the inestimable treasure—the pearl of great price. They who find it will gain this world and the world to come. They who serve God will not want any thing that is truly good for them. Their privations for the sake of the Gospel, will in the end be immensely for their gain. Even if their life were sacrificed in the cause of their

heavenly Master, it would be not only their duty but their privilege to surrender it for his sake. We must be faithful unto death, if we look for the crown of life. Let none content themselves with being Christians only in name, or to remain unacquainted with the Saviour of guilty men. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near."

Let those who reject the Gospel take a lesson from the fate of their brethren, as exhibited in the records of Scripture. Look at the unbelieving world at the time of the flood. They rejected the message of God, and they perished in a general ruin. Had they nothing to allege in justification of their unbelief in "the denounced judgment?" Was it a thing likely in the estimate of human wisdom, that God would destroy the whole inhabitants of the earth, according to the word of one who must have appeared a dreaming enthusiast? Was he the only favourite of Heaven? Would God destroy his own workmanship? Many a plausible objection they no doubt summoned up to arm their minds against the threatened punishment. But in the appointed moment judgment was executed. The waters came, and they were all overwhelmed. Where now are Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain? Their inhabitants are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, and are no longer unbelievers! Where are Nineveh and Babylon, and all the proud oppressors of God's people, and rejectors of his mercy? They have been swept from the earth according to their long-predicted doom; and a tittle of the threatened vengeance remains not unexecuted.

The fate of Israel after they rejected their Messiah, affords another warning. They had many reasons to

allege for not acknowledging him, and they pointed out many things in his pretensions, which, in their ignorance or prejudice, seemed to them inconsistent with the Scriptures. But they have drunk the bitter cup which his denunciations have put into their hands; and their temporal calamities themselves, without any reference to their spiritual condition, call to unbelievers with a voice of thunder.

These things are on record for a warning to man; yet such is his blindness and hardness of heart, that except he sees the divine judgments with his own eyes, he will not believe. One of the French atheists justified atheism, by alleging that God could not exist, otherwise he would have punished him for denying and blaspheming him. God is not a man, that he should manifest the weakness of human passion. His enemies cannot escape him. He chooses his time to bring them to judgment, and he is never too late, as eternity is always before him, for their punishment. The snares of unbelievers may entangle their own feet; their sophistry may ruin themselves, but cannot invalidate the truth of God.

Christianity comes down to us supported by evidence which clothes it with an authority that confounds the infidel, even when his prejudice or pride forbids him to submit. It has stood the test of time. Ages have rolled away, empires have risen and fallen. The mightiest revolutions have swept across our globe, and changed the whole appearance of things; but Christianity has survived the shock. From Adam to Noah; from Noah to Abraham; from Abraham to Moses; from Moses to Malachi, a cloud of witnesses testified to Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah. And now

that eighteen hundred years have passed away since the advent "of Him that was to come," his religion has been carried as a testimony to every nation under heaven; and, to the Greek and to the barbarian, to the bond and to the free, to the polished inhabitant of civilized Europe, and to the rude native of Africa and the South Sea, it has equally proved the power of God unto salvation. It has been persecuted, and, worse than all, it has been corrupted. Under the name of Christianity the blood of God's people has been poured out like water, but still the truth has been preserved like the bush that burned, and yet was not consumed. Every effort that has been made against it has been baffled, and every objection has led to its evidence and doctrine being more fully investigated and better understood. In the present age, infidelity, beaten at all hands, is availing itself of the neology of Germany as its last forlorn hope. But, on account of the very subtlety of that crafty system of unbelief, according to which the Bible is neither boldly denied nor honestly admitted, it is the more essential that the believer should consider well "the certainty of those things which are most surely believed among us;" that he should know the truth of Scripture not merely in the mass but in the detail; that he should be able to answer the cavils of those who would deny the genuineness of particular books, and cloud the inspiration of all; in short, that he should not only be persuaded that the Bible is the word of God, but also be enabled to give a reason for his belief. The subjects of which it treats are not matters of empty speculation, or trifling importance. It is a solemn thing for all to hear of Christ, and of the righteousness which is received by faith in his atonement.

The folly will ere long be made manifest of those who have altogether refused to examine the contents of the Scriptures, or have allowed themselves to be perverted by the superficial objections of infidels or sceptics.

The knowledge of God is the sublimest science; and the knowledge of God, in the fulness of his character, is not to be found except in the Divine word. The most illiterate peasant who understands the Gospel, is more enlightened than the most accomplished scholar who is unacquainted with the manifestation of God in his Son Jesus Christ. The day approaches which will reveal salvation through his name in all its unspeakable importance. On that momentous day the final destiny of every individual of the human race will be eternally fixed; those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt: and they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

END OF VOLUME II.

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